

### What Is The Gospel?

Do you know? Think about it! Could you tell me, in ten words or less, WHAT is the gospel? Not what books talk about it (“the gospels”), nor who brought it, but WHAT is the gospel? What is it about? What does it say? Do you really know – and if you have an answer, can you prove it from the Bible?

So many think they know, but the reality is that no one understands the gospel Jesus brought. They teach a gospel *about* Christ, they exalt Him as a person, and acknowledge He died for their sins – but they never say a word about the MESSAGE Jesus brought. And that **message** *was* the gospel! And yet no one today is teaching THAT message!

For example, the gospel most taught claims Jesus came to bring peace on Earth; but Jesus said He did no such thing! (**Matthew 10:34**). They think He came to do away with the law – but He said the law would not pass away while the heavens and the Earth stand! (**Matthew 5:17-18**). The world believes He spoke in parables to make the meaning plain – but Jesus said He spoke in parables so the people could not understand! (**Mark 4:11-12**).

Remember, your Bible plainly says there is MORE than one gospel! (**2 Corinthians 11:4**). In fact, it says it more than once, and pronounces a DOUBLE CURSE on anyone who brings a false gospel! (**Galatians 1:6-9**). So how can you make sure you've received the REAL gospel – the gospel that Jesus actually brought? That is...

### LESSON 11: WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

*Gospel* is a word which means literally “good news”. It's not a fancy religious term, it simply means a happy announcement. And surprisingly though it may seem, Jesus was not the first one to bring that gospel!

What was the beginning of the gospel? **Mark 1:1-4**. What was the gospel about? **Verses 14-15**. And this gospel of the kingdom – did it start at Jesus' ministry, or before? **Luke 16:16**. Did Jesus make it clear what this gospel was about? **Matthew 4:23**.

Already we can see the gospel of God is the gospel about the KINGDOM of God, the good news about God's *kingdom*. Jesus was not the first person to bring this gospel, John the Baptist brought it first and once John paved the way Jesus took it and greatly expanded it.

So whose Gospel is it? **2 Corinthians 2:12**. Is it a gospel *about* Christ, or a gospel *OF* Christ? **2 Corinthians 4:4**. [The difference is that “OF Christ” means it's brought *by* Him, or comes *from* Him – it might be *about* anything; “ABOUT Christ” would mean that Jesus is the subject – but the Bible never says the gospel is ABOUT Christ!]

What did this Gospel bring to light? **2 Timothy 1:10**. Is it Jesus' gospel, or His Father's gospel? **John 12:49**. Why did Jesus come? **John 1:18**. Where did Jesus get His information? **Luke 10:22**.

Jesus' gospel *wasn't about Himself!* HE didn't speak of Himself! All things were about the FATHER. It was to reveal the FATHER that Jesus came! Not His own gospel, or the gospel of His OWN Kingdom, but the gospel of His FATHER'S KINGDOM. Today, the only gospel we hear is *about* Jesus; tearing down the Father and the Father's laws and exalting Jesus instead, that's what you've heard taught – but that isn't the gospel Jesus brought! That's not the gospel He commanded His disciples to preach to all nations (**Mark 16:15**)! Because Jesus didn't bring a gospel about Himself!

What was the goal of Jesus' gospel – to get people to believe in Him? **John 5:24**. When someone confesses Jesus is Lord, is it for Jesus' glory? **Philippians 2:11**. Did Jesus come to do His own will? **John 5:30**. Did He seek His own glory? **John 8:50**.

There are many more verses because it's what Jesus talked about all the time – it's why He came, to reveal the Father's Kingdom. But what is this gospel about His Father's Kingdom? What is His Kingdom?

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD

There are many opinions about this; most believe it was something “set up in men's hearts”; others believe it was the Church; others believe it is some nebulous feel-good thing that we'll create on this Earth when we “all love one another, start a new age of tolerance and forgiveness, and world peace” Then the Kingdom of God will be established in the hearts of men!” – or some such nonsense.

Do you really care what a bunch of men think it *might* be when you can plainly read in your Bible what it *will* be? The fundamental question is, is this a LITERAL kingdom, or a SPIRITUAL kingdom? You are already familiar with the prophecies of Daniel after the last lesson, specifically the prophecy of the great image in **Daniel 2**, but let's look at it again with this new question in mind, and see what bearing that has on the Kingdom of God.

The story begins in **Daniel 2:1**, and continues through the chapter. But for this question, the key **verses** begin in **37-38**. Nebuchadnezzar was the head of this statue; a KING of KINGS, RULER of all the Earth. Notice that he was a LITERAL head of a LITERAL empire! With POWER, strength, and GLORY, literally ruling over all kingdoms, peoples, animals and birds.

Surely no one would claim that Nebuchadnezzar was king over men's hearts! Or that he headed a SPIRITUAL kingdom! No, it is plain that he was a literal ruler over a literal, earthly kingdom, making laws, executing judgments, and all the things a king does on Earth.

Daniel says that after Nebuchadnezzar there would be three other kingdoms – these are still literal, earthly, human kingdoms (**verses 39-43**). But then in **verse 44**, Daniel reveals in the days of the final ten divisions of the fourth kingdom, God will set up a NEW kingdom – one that “*shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms*” – notice that wording! First, it breaks in pieces – it destroys the POWER of these kingdoms. Then it CONSUMES them! It absorbs them into itself once they are broken! This kingdom then FILLS THE EARTH (**verse 35**).

Notice this new kingdom God sets up doesn't fill HEAVEN. Because it isn't set up there! It fills the EARTH. It first crushes, then absorbs, the KINGDOMS of this Earth! Now read **Revelation 11:15**. In that specific day – at the second coming of Christ – the kingdoms of this world BECOME the

kingdoms of Christ; which is why He is KING OF KINGS! Because these other kings over these other kingdoms will be subservient to HIM in His PHYSICAL, LITERAL, kingdom!

Read **Daniel 7:27**. Notice this Kingdom is UNDER the whole heaven; not IN heaven, but UNDER heaven – on the EARTH! This is why **Revelation 5:10** says we shall reign on the EARTH – because God is going to set up His Kingdom here, ON THE EARTH. Not in the hearts of men! His Kingdom will be a literal kingdom, just as Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander and Caesar were literal kings, ruling literal people. The Bible is full of verses telling of the literal return of Christ to rule a literal kingdom on a literal Earth!

You've already read many such verses in the last several lessons about the return of Christ, the establishment of the kingdom ruled by the saints of the first resurrection, the millennial reign of Christ and the saints, and so on; so I won't belabor the point any more here. All those things are part of the establishment of the Kingdom of God, and that was the good news Jesus brought. That is the gospel!

## THE PROMISE TO THE SAINTS

Most of the world assumes the Bible promises heaven as the reward of the saved. In Lessons 6-8 you learned there is no such scripture in the Bible. Instead, we are destined to be "*kings and priests*" and "*we shall reign on the Earth*" (**Revelation 5:10**). But it's time to study a bit deeper into that promise, and read WHY we are promised the Earth – and whom we have to thank for that promise!

What is our promise? **1 John 2:25**. How do we receive eternal life – is it given to us now, or must we INHERIT it? **Luke 10:25**. Can we inherit it now, or is it in the FUTURE that we shall be heirs? **Hebrews 1:14**. What exactly are we going to inherit – besides eternal life? **Matthew 25:34**.

So the inheritance is yet future – and the inheritance is eternal life in the KINGDOM OF GOD! This is the GOSPEL! And this is why the scripture said "*life and immortality*" are brought "*to light through the gospel*" (**2 Timothy 1:10**) – this is what the gospel is all about!

Is this inheritance *conditional*? **Galatians 5:21**. Who will not inherit the kingdom of God? **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**. Does such a person have ANY inheritance with God? **Ephesians 5:5**. But why do we have this inheritance – an inheritance comes from a dead ancestor, so from whom are we inheriting it? **Romans 8:17**. So we are heirs to the SAME inheritance as Jesus Christ – and where does His inheritance come from? **Hebrews 1:1-2**. And, through Christ, do we become literal sons of God – and therefore, heirs just as He is an heir? **Galatians 4:7**.

These are powerful scriptures, but they ARE scriptures! They ARE infallible! You are to receive a portion of the SAME inheritance Jesus Christ received! But why you? Why me? WHO will have a portion in this inheritance? **James 2:5**.

Notice that word PROMISE used there; that is the key! This inheritance was PROMISED to them that love Him; those "rich in faith". WHERE was it promised?

Who was the first person to receive this promise? **Galatians 3:18**. Do we receive the thing promised immediately? **Hebrews 6:12**. Did Abraham receive it immediately? **Verses 13-15**. But did receiving the *promise* of the inheritance mean instantly *receiving* the inheritance? Or was he just an HEIR to the promise? **Verse 17**.

It's time now to go back and read the original promise itself. (Abraham was originally called Abram until God changed it in **Genesis 17:5**.) The first promise is in **Genesis 12:1-3**. And how did Abraham react to that command of God? **Verse 4**. The next portion of the promise was made in **verse 7**. God again commented on it in **Genesis 13:14-17**. Notice that Abraham was in the land of Israel at the time! This then was a literal piece of property being promised to Abraham! But the major portion of the promise was made, and the agreement ratified, in **Genesis 15**; read the entire chapter first before we go on.

In **verse 1** God promises that He (God) would be Abraham's shield and "exceeding great reward". We'll come back to that. Abraham wanted to know how God would give him a reward, since he was old and childless. In **verse 4** God promised him a son (Isaac). In **verse 5** He promised him millions of offspring. Then the key – **verse 6**. Abraham BELIEVED God, he had FAITH, and God counted that faith for righteousness! Paul talks about that a great deal, which we'll get to in a moment.

**Verse 7** finally gets to the real POINT of all this; the inheritance was LAND. Land on the Earth! In **verse 18** God makes a COVENANT with Abraham. God had made verbal promises, but this was the first BINDING CONTRACT God made with him! This was a covenant of FAITH, one which God made with Abraham because he "believed God". One God ratified by passing between the pieces of the sacrifice (**verse 17**) and accepting it. The terms of the covenant were simple; because Abraham believed God, God would give Him the land from the Nile to the Euphrates – most of the Middle East – as a literal inheritance. But get this – he wasn't going to inherit it *in this lifetime!*

Speaking of Abraham, the Bible says he "*died in faith, NOT having received the promises, but having seen them afar off*" (**Hebrews 11:13**). That is, he received the PROMISE, but not the THING PROMISED. He still hasn't received it! But he died in FAITH, believing he WOULD receive the promise – the inheritance of the Kingdom of God!

Was the promise made to Abraham alone? **Acts 7:5**. Who is the "seed" of Abraham to whom these promises were made? **Genesis 26:1-4**. God was speaking to Isaac there – why did Isaac inherit these promises? **Verse 5**. Was the same promise made to Isaac's "seed" – his children – as well? **Genesis 35:9, 12**.

So you see – ALL the Israelite people – not just the Jews, but all twelve sons of Jacob – Israel – were to inherit this land. It was a FAMILY inheritance, given by God to Abraham, then given to Isaac, and then given to Jacob whose name was changed to Israel. Then, divided among Israel's twelve sons – ONE of which was Judah, the father of the Jews. But eleven other tribes are also to partake of this inheritance!

But how does this apply to YOU? Perhaps you are a Gentile; are you able to take part in this inheritance? **Ephesians 2:11-12**. In the PAST – that is before Christ – you WERE strangers from the covenant of promise! The promise made to Abraham *could not apply to you!* But **verse 13** shows that is no longer the case! And **verse 19** makes it clear you are no longer STRANGERS to that covenant, but fellow-citizens with the Israelites!

How did the coming of Christ make it possible for Gentiles to inherit these promises? **Galatians 3:29**. Even Greeks and Gentiles and women can become part of the covenant. **Verse 28**. How? **Verse 26**.

Jew, Gentile, man, woman, it doesn't matter PROVIDED you have FAITH in Jesus; that FAITH then will ENTITLE you to be an heir WITH ABRAHAM "according to the promise" – you aren't heir to a DIFFERENT promise than was given to Israel, but a part of the VERY SAME PROMISE!

What was the promise made to Abraham? **Romans 4:13**. And why was the promise made to Abraham? (Same verse). To be called a child of Abraham, you must do what Abraham did, right? **John 8:39**. And how do you become a daughter of Sarah, his wife? **1 Peter 3:6**.

God made this promise to Abraham because of FAITH. The promise was to the descendants of Abraham, yes – but to the *spiritual* descendants as well as the *physical* descendants! Paul calls the promise to the physical children of Abraham “of the law”, and the promise to the spiritual children – that is, those who have the faith of Abraham “by grace” or “by faith”. And now we will use that to make sense of an awkward passage in **Romans 4**.

Start in **verses 1-5**. If you remember the lessons on grace and faith, you learned these verses mean that Abraham was obeying God in every way he knew, and he believed all three parts of faith; that **God existed**, that **God rewarded those who obeyed Him**, and that **he was obeying Him**. Because he was obeying God in every way he knew how, he had complete faith; so God overlooked his sins of ignorance through grace, because of his faith!

The point Paul makes is that the reward promised to Abraham in **Genesis 15** was promised fifteen years before Abraham was circumcised; 430 years before any of the law of Moses was written. It was a reward based on faith, and grace, and not the works of Moses’ law. Now read **verses 6-9**. Abraham received this blessedness – this grace to overlook his sins, AND the promises – without being circumcised. But now **verse 11** starts to apply it to you – Abraham received this blessing without circumcision SO THAT he could be the FATHER of **ALL THEM THAT BELIEVE**.

Notice that! Whether you carry Abraham’s blood or not, if you have the faith that Abraham had, you become an adopted child of Abraham! Even if you’re not of the circumcision (not an Israelite) according to **verse 12**. Why is this possible? **Verse 13**. This was not a promise made through the law of Moses, this was a promise made through faith! **Verse 14** says if it was a promise of the law, then the promise of faith is meaningless.

In other words, suppose you’re a Rockefeller. Whether you’re a good person or a bad person you still inherit the millions of your father. It’s a promise of LAW. Not of faith – there is no particular obedience involved. You have a *right* to that inheritance. But God gave the promise to Abraham WITHOUT the works of the law of Moses, through FAITH. And it is given to the descendants of Abraham ON THE CONDITION that they have faith as well! **Verse 16**. Not only to the literal children of Abraham, but to you, the SPIRITUAL child of Abraham, no matter what race you are, IF YOU BELIEVE as Abraham believed! **Verses 20-24**.

Because of the faith of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God gave His promises to the children of Israel (**Romans 9:4**); His covenant was made with them. The adoption into the family of God was *their* birthright – it belonged to THEM. As Jesus said “*salvation is of the Jews*” (**John 4:22**). Paul said there is much advantage in being a Jew (**Romans 3:1-2**).

So to inherit the blessings of Abraham, you must become an Israelite. But how? Paul prefaced the above statement by saying the TRUE Jews are Jews in the spirit, not the flesh! (**Romans 2:28-29**). Regardless of your race, it’s your faith in those promises and your faith in Christ and how you ACT that makes you a Jew, or spiritually circumcised, in the eyes of God!

To whom belong these promises? **Romans 9:4**. Why do they belong to them? **Verse 5**. But can they be accessed by anyone else? **Verse 6** [This refers to those strangers who were circumcised and became a part of the nation of Israel]. Are ALL the children of Abraham entitled to this inheritance? **Verse 7**.

Paul shows here that you do not HAVE to be a son of Abraham to inherit the blessings of Abraham, and just because you ARE a son of Abraham, does not mean you ARE entitled to the blessings! He does this by showing that Ishmael, Abraham's other son, did not receive the blessings God gave to Isaac. Isaac was the son God promised in **Genesis 15**, because Isaac was the child born of faith – Ishmael was not, and Paul calls him the “*child of the flesh*” (**Romans 9:8-9**). Similarly, Isaac had two sons, only one of which received the promises (**Romans 9:10-13**), and for the same reason; the son with faith (Jacob) inherited the promises.

Paul uses these examples to prove that just because you're born an Israelite, doesn't mean you'll receive the promise; and just because you're born a Gentile, doesn't mean you can't receive the promise. Paul cites more examples of this later, in **Romans 9:25-26, 30-31**. Why did Israel fall away? **Verses 32-33**. Because they lacked faith, they didn't recognize Jesus when He came (He was the “stumblingstone”), they in fact killed Him, and naturally they didn't get their reward. On the other hand, the Gentiles did recognize and accept Him, and they will get the reward originally promised to the Jews who rejected Him.

Jesus Himself said this in **Matthew 8:11-12**; these “many” that come from the “east and west” are Gentiles, and they will be sitting down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom; but the CHILDREN of the Kingdom – the Jews standing there, who rejected Him – will be “cast out”, because the promise is not of the law, but of FAITH! And if *anyone*, Jew or Gentile, has faith in Jesus and believes this gospel, they can be saved, and adopted into the family of Abraham! And yet if anyone, Jew or Gentile, rejects Jesus – or accepts Him with their lips, **but doesn't show faith to back it up** – they will find themselves “cast out”!

Now, since we've started in **Romans 9**, let's keep reading through the next few chapters since it is all about the same subject. **Romans 10:1-3** summarizes the problem with the Israelites; they seek God THEIR way, using THEIR own definitions of righteousness, and the traditions of men – NOT the way God commanded them (**Mark 7:7-9**). This continues to this day.

**Romans 10:12-13** is abused by many; it doesn't say that's ALL you have to do – “*call on the name of the Lord*”. We know that to call on Him, you have to have faith in Him; to have faith in Him, you have to obey Him. To obey Him, you must be keeping His commandments; and if you do all those things, YES, whether Jew or Gentile, male or female, black or white, God is eager to answer you! But note these people – Paul is talking about Israelites – did not obey the gospel! (**verses 16, 21**)

Has God cast away Israel altogether? **Romans 11:1-2**. Did Israel obtain what it was seeking (the promise)? **Verse 7**. Who did? (Same verse). Who is this “election”? **Verse 11**. Why did Israel fall away – so the Gentiles could be “elected” (chosen)? **Verses 12, 14**.

And now in **verse 16**, Paul launches into a simple parable; the olive tree is Israel. The wild olive tree is the Gentiles. And each person is a branch of one of those trees. Now read **verses 17-24**. The point being that many in Israel were “broken off” of their natural tree because of unbelief (**verse 20**). That is, they won't receive the inheritance to which their birth entitled them, because their actions disqualified them.

On the other hand, through FAITH, the Gentiles can be grafted into the natural olive tree in their place, and partake of the ROOT (Jesus, see **Revelation 5:5**) and fatness (promises/inheritance) of the natural olive tree (the house of Israel). The trunk of this tree, to keep with the analogy, would be Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Most fruit today grows on trees that are grafted; and once the grafting happens, it is as much a part of the tree as any of the native branches. It shares sap and grows fruit and gives back energy gathered through the leaves just like any other branch. So you, if you have faith, can be grafted on to the same olive tree as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob! And if a part of the true Church of God, then regardless of color, gender, or nationality, **YOU ARE AN ISRAELITE!**

It's very important you understand these principles because **YOU ARE NOT A GENTILE** anymore! Because *"there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"* (**Galatians 3:28**). **Christianity is not a Gentile religion!** It is **STILL** a religion of Abraham's descendants! If you are not a son of Abraham, **YOU WILL NOT BE SAVED!**

If you're a Gentile, then in times past you were unable to access this covenant of promise, but the **GOOD NEWS** Jesus brought is that **NOW**, even if you aren't Israelite by birth, **you can become one by faith!** And that faith **CONVERTS** you into an Israelite and places you into the family of Abraham – and by extension, into the Family of God – which is the Kingdom of God – and **THAT IS THE GOSPEL!**

This means Gentiles are given the **SAME** promises, and the **SAME** rewards, as the Israelites – and that promise was to inherit the Earth, remember! And that is the gospel! (**Ephesians 3:6**). How is this possible? Because the Gentiles are, by faith, spiritually adopted as sons of Abraham! (**Galatians 3:7-9**).

Did you notice **verse 8**? **The gospel was preached to ABRAHAM!** 2,000 years before Christ! **And the gospel preached to Abraham was "in you shall all nations be blessed"** because through adoption into his lineage, all nations would have access to Christ!

No wonder it is called **GOOD NEWS!** It means that now **ANYONE**, of any color, any nation, male or female, can now have access to what was once a **VERY** exclusive promise made only to the male children of Abraham! And those promises are eternal life, and an **eternal inheritance of the Earth!** (**Matthew 5:5**). Not heaven – heaven will be empty, because even the Father is one day coming **HERE!** (**Revelation 21:3, 22-23**). The Kingdom of God will be coming to **EARTH!**

## THE DOWN PAYMENT OF THE KINGDOM

Now read **Hebrews 11:8-17** for a brief recap of Abraham's life. Notice in **verse 8** how impressed God is that he simply **OBEYED** and went to the place that *"he would afterwards receive for an inheritance"*. Living there, as did Isaac and Jacob who were heirs with him of the **SAME** promise (**verse 9**). Not a different promise! There is one promise made to all the saints, you, me, and Abraham are all offered the same reward (**Matthew 20:1-15** – especially **verse 10**).

**Hebrews 11:10** says Abraham didn't accept these present kingdoms, the ones men set up on this Earth, unlike the Jews who said *"we have no king but Caesar"* (**John 19:15**). Instead, Abraham confessed he was looking for another country – one whose maker, builder – and King – is God. In his lifetime, Abraham didn't receive the inheritance (**Hebrews 11:13**), but was a stranger, an outcast, someone seeking a country. He was seeking the Kingdom of God – a heavenly country. Not a country **IN** heaven – we know it was an earthly inheritance – but a country that comes down **FROM** heaven – to be established on this Earth by orders directly from the Father! (**Verse 16**).

That is why Peter says we await an inheritance which is *"reserved in heaven"* (**1 Peter 1:4**). The inheritance is **STORED** there – but the inheritance will be brought by Jesus when He comes back,

because He said “*my reward is with me*” (**Revelation 22:12**). When He returns He will bring our reward with Him!

We can't have our inheritance yet, because it is possessed by the people on this Earth and is still full of sin. Before we can receive it, it must be REDEEMED, just as we were. Read **Ephesians 1:14**. We have just a small DOWN PAYMENT of our inheritance; the “earnest”, which we have until the purchased possession – the promised land – is redeemed by God. And THEN we, like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, will inherit the Kingdom “prepared by the Father” for us.

As a final proof the Kingdom of God will be on the Earth, (not that more is really needed at this point), go back and read the parable in **Luke 19:11-27**. Then read the similar parable in **Matthew 25:14-34**. Both of those make it clear that Jesus has not YET received His Kingdom!

He compares it to a man (Himself) going into a far country (heaven) to RECEIVE a kingdom (**Luke 19:12**). And then when He RETURNS (**verse 15**), after RECEIVING the kingdom, He comes in glory (**Matthew 25:31**) – as a King, *at His second coming!* He says this happens after a “long time” (**verse 19**), and when He comes His REWARD is with Him (**Revelation 22:12**) – because then He has the POWER to GIVE His servants a reward!

He hasn't yet received His Kingdom! He will only receive it when He returns! Notice how clearly **Revelation 11:15** says, speaking of a time still in our future, that at that moment “*The kingdoms of this world HAVE BECOME the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ*” – and speaking of the same future moment, **Revelation 12:10** says NOW the Kingdom of God has arrived! It hasn't arrived yet, in our time – we are still waiting for it to arrive!

## THE DUALITY

The Jews were very familiar with these prophecies of a literal restoration of Israel as the Kingdom of God on Earth (**Luke 19:11**). They understood their promised inheritance. They were certain that when Christ came, He would AT THAT TIME restore the Kingdom to Israel (**Acts 1:6**).

That misunderstanding came from prophecies like **Isaiah 61:1-9**, which as the previous lesson pointed out, they didn't “rightly divide”. That verse was meant to be understood in two parts – one part that was fulfilled at Jesus' FIRST coming, and the other to be fulfilled at His SECOND coming.

But remember prophecies are often dual; there is usually a spiritual AND a physical fulfillment. The physical fulfillment is clear from a thousand scriptures; Jesus will return and set up a literal government on this Earth, administered by the saints under Him (**Matthew 25:34**).

But there is also a spiritual application! A spiritual TYPE of God's Kingdom! To understand the spiritual version, think carefully about the literal Kingdom of God; read **Romans 14:11** and **Philippians 2:10**. How will Jesus rule this kingdom? **Revelation 12:5**. When? **Revelation 19:15**. And what is His title then? **Verse 16**. What is the point of this Kingdom of God? **1 Corinthians 15:24-28**.

Jesus is coming here to set up a kingdom, so He can one day – when the kingdom is perfected – deliver it up to His Father. Remember, it's really the Father's Kingdom! The gospel was always about His FATHER'S rule. But before Jesus can hand it over, He must first “subdue all things” to Himself. After all, you wouldn't give your dad a broken present, would you?



Likewise, Jesus won't give an imperfect Kingdom to His Father. First, He must put down ALL rule, ALL power, and ALL authority. Rule the nations with a rod of iron; make EVERY KNEE bow before His rule. Whether they like it or not! But this won't violate free will; the nations will have free will to refuse His rule – but they will suffer the consequences of their sin if they do! (**Zechariah 14:16-19**).

This will be a time of SURRENDER to Christ, of learning that God's way really DOES work, and that when followed, the laws of God really will make the deserts blossom like roses, and make the waste places inhabitable! This is what the Kingdom of God WILL be like in that day! This is the literal fulfillment, the "antitype" of this prophecy. Now remember that picture for a moment!

Back in **Luke 19** once more; there is more in this parable that we passed over before. The primary purpose is to reveal the LITERAL kingdom, but Jesus also mentions the SPIRITUAL kingdom if you noticed it! Jesus acknowledges that He did not yet have a kingdom; that His inheritance was not to be received until His return. He was not *yet* a king! Just an heir (**Galatians 4:1-2**), with no real authority yet, even though He was technically Lord of all.

And yet, even though He had no *official* authority, He had servants (**Luke 19:13**), and citizens (**verse 14**), even though He hadn't yet received His REAL kingdom (**verse 15**)! These are citizens of His present, spiritual kingdom!

Did Jesus come as a King, or as a servant? **Philippians 2:7-8**. But was Jesus a king? **John 18:37**. [Note: "thou sayest" was an expression meaning "what you said is right"]. But was He a king to everyone? (Last part of that same verse). To whom is He king? **Revelation 15:3**.

Notice that Jesus *was* a king "*and everyone who is of the truth hears His voice*"! See, Jesus is GOING to be a king. He is GOING to be your ruler. You WILL bow before Him one day. He has sworn by Himself that it will happen (**Isaiah 45:23**). And Jesus came to announce that fact IN ADVANCE!

Now imagine if you could go back in time, a decade or two and buy stock in Yahoo, bottled water or cell phones. A few dollars in the right company then, when they were just starting out, would be worth billions today! In a similar way, Jesus compared the Kingdom of God to a grain of mustard seed, which starts out as the smallest of seeds but grows into a giant tree (**Matthew 13:31-32**).

The Kingdom of God started just as small, with one man, Jesus; one man who acknowledged the Kingship and rule of God, His Father. And if you buy one tiny seed – one share of that kingdom – and have the patience to wait for it to grow – it will turn into a world-girdling empire! And that tiny seed you buy today and carefully protect and nurture for the rest of your life will be beyond price when it grows into that great tree!

Jesus came to announce that HE WAS KING. He has sworn by Himself that HE WILL RULE THE NATIONS – and if you believe Him, you can take advantage of the greatest insider stock tip ever! Jesus came to proclaim the Kingdom of God was COMING! And even though He had no official authority AS YET, if you BELIEVED He would be King – that is, if you BELIEVED THE GOSPEL, as Jesus put it – and if you voluntarily chose to accept Him as King TODAY, you would be given a position of authority in His future Kingdom! Because you helped and supported Him when He was "without reputation", He will help and support you when He is famous!

## KING DAVID'S ARMY

The Bible often works in symbols; there are patterns throughout the Bible. Paul calls our attention to many of these when he says things happened to ancient Israel as examples for us. While they did literally happen, they were also inspired by God to teach us lessons (**1 Corinthians 10:11**).

And in a similar way, David is an allegory of Jesus – while of course there was a literal David, many of the things David was inspired to do also pictured things Jesus was one day to do. This is why God said David was a man after His own heart (**Acts 13:22**). David was very similar in nature to Jesus; so many of the choices David made were naturally similar to choices Jesus would make. God capitalized on this similarity and caused events to happen around him that would picture events in the life of Jesus as well – for “our admonition”.

David was anointed head of the Kingdom of Israel (**1 Samuel 16:13**), a long time, perhaps 10 years, before he actually took power and was accepted as King by Israel. Jesus, likewise was anointed (**Acts 10:38**) by God long before He actually will take power and be accepted as King by Israel.

When David was fleeing from the then-king of Israel, Saul, he was already officially king. He had been anointed by God, so his kingship was assured. But he had no power! No one to follow him, no kingdom to lead! A king's power is in his people – if he has no people, what is he king of? You could proclaim yourself king of England – but unless the *people* of England are willing to follow you, are you really king? What if God, Himself proclaimed you king – until the people are willing to accept you as their leader, are you their king? Technically, yes – but in practice, no.

This is the same situation we find Jesus in when He became a man. Jesus was king of Jerusalem (**Matthew 21:5**), but His subjects rejected Him (**Luke 19:14**). He didn't come to call fire from heaven (**Luke 9:54-56**), so He had no way of establishing His rule... unless some people *voluntarily* CHOSE to follow Him, on FAITH that He would indeed be King one day and reward them then!

So what did the follower-less, not-yet-king David do? **1 Samuel 22:1**. And of whom was his first army composed? **Verse 2**. Who does Jesus call into His spiritual “army”? **1 Corinthians 1:26-29**. Did He spend time with the respected people, or the gutter trash? **Mark 2:15-16**. Why? **Verse 17**.

The Pharisees didn't NEED a new king. They were very happy with the king they had – Caesar. They had money, respect, authority – if things changed they had everything to lose and, as they saw it, very little to gain. They were – they thought – “whole”. In reality they weren't (**Revelation 3:17**), but they thought they were, so they weren't interested in new leadership.

People who had authority, money, and respect under Saul's leadership likewise had everything to lose by thumbing their nose at the powers-that-were. Why rock the boat? They were comfortable, they were happy. But those who were in debt, those who were distressed, those who were unhappy with the present regime WERE interested in new leadership; so they followed David, SURRENDERED THEIR WILLS TO HIS, and “*he became a captain over them*”!

These four hundred men became the foundation of his new army, and you can be sure those who were with him from the beginning gained very high positions in the new government, *once David received a real kingdom! Because they had faith in him, believed in him, and served him WHEN HE HAD NO AUTHORITY YET! They accepted him as their king, when he was king in name only!*

Likewise the prostitutes, bookies, destitute, sick, and unhappy are the ones who seek Christ, because they seek a BETTER kingdom! They have something to GAIN by the arrival of a new king who will crush and absorb the present kingdoms! But the rich are too good at twisting the corrupt system we have to their own ends to have any interest in changing it!

This world already has a king. The Jews rejected Jesus as their king, screaming to Pilate “*we have no king but Caesar!*” (**John 19:15**). He came into His own people, those who should have been glad to hail Him as King, and they rejected Him (**John 1:11**). But those who DID receive Him – now, in this time – He offered salvation (**John 1:12**). He gave them a chance to be kings and priests in His fledgling government!

Because someone accepts Jesus as king *when he is not officially a king*, because they bend the knee to Him NOW while the rest of the world laughs at them, because they serve Him and His rules now, *as if His Kingdom were already here*, Jesus treats them AS IF they were in His Kingdom now! Giving them protection, assistance and support – and also judging and punishing them if they reflect badly on Him.

When His kingdom finally DOES come, they will have had a lifetime of practice – and are first in line for a long list of promotions – or, to use a business metaphor, a HUGE pile of stock splits!

The world stubbornly refuses to surrender to Christ now, but YOU CAN. They will one day – Jesus has sworn it – but for you, the Kingdom of God CAN BE NOW. Not the REAL Kingdom – merely a small spiritual TYPE of the Kingdom of God. The EARNEST of that Kingdom (**Ephesians 1:14**), the DOWN PAYMENT of your inheritance, “*until the redemption of the promised possession*”!

Now is the time for YOU to surrender your will to Christ, to learn God’s way really DOES work even in the midst of a crooked world! Now is the time for you to learn that, when followed, the laws of God really will make the deserts blossom like roses, and make the waste places inhabitable! The world will be FORCED to learn that in the world to come – but you can CHOOSE to learn it now.

Is Jesus the Master (or King) of His disciples? **John 13:13**. Who is your master? **Matthew 23:10**. Do you have a Master in heaven right now? **Ephesians 6:9**. Did Jesus act as a king would act? **Matthew 7:28-29**. Are you supposed to follow Jesus and acknowledge Him as your guide? **1 Peter 2:25**.

If, through FAITH that Jesus WILL be King, you treat Him as your King TODAY, you will be like one of those 400 disgruntled debtors who followed David and were the first line of attack in setting up the new Kingdom of God! There *will* be a Kingdom, with or without you – so you might as well join up now! But do you have the FAITH to invest in that small mustard seed, and believe the gospel?

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU

Read **Luke 17:20-21**. Many have read these verses and based on them alone, concluded there IS no literal kingdom, when you’ve read a hundred verses that say there MUST be! Remember that rule – one vague scripture cannot dismiss a hundred clear ones! And the other rule – always stop and read EXACTLY WHAT the verse says. Most of the time you just assume it means what you’ve always heard. But what does it really say? And finally, a third rule I haven’t mentioned before, WHY did this come up?

Often a verse makes much more sense when you realize it was to answer a SPECIFIC misunderstanding someone had. Here, the Pharisees, not rightly dividing the prophecies, were convinced IF He were the Christ, He would bring the Kingdom of God *right then*. Since He hadn’t, **He**

**must not have been the Christ!** This was the basis of most of their arguments, and the main reason they rejected Him. The logic is sound enough, actually. Just built on a bad assumption – that Jesus was coming only once.

**Because** they thought that, Jesus said “*the kingdom of God doesn’t come with observation*” – that is, you can’t see it coming. This sounds very strange, because He appears to contradict Himself in **verse 24** and in another prophecy of the same period in **Matthew 24:27, 30** and also in **Revelation 1:7**. It is clear from many scriptures that Jesus – and hence His literal Kingdom – DOES come by observation – you CAN see it coming! Why did Jesus say you can’t? Again, THE CONTEXT! The same set of verses answers this question! **If I could give just ONE piece of advice to every Christian, it’s READ THE CONTEXT!** That alone would solve virtually every misunderstanding!

Go back and read **Luke 17:20** again, but this time keep reading all the way to **verse 24**, and then re-read **verse 22**. Do you see what it said? In these five verses, Jesus says first you CAN’T see His Kingdom (because it’s inside you), and then says when He comes, EVERYONE will see His Kingdom! And then makes sense of the riddle in **verse 22** where He says “*ye shall desire to see ONE OF THE DAYS of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.*” (“Son of man” is another name for Jesus).

Get that! ONE of the days! That means there is **more than ONE day** when Jesus comes to set up a kingdom! The one you can’t *see*, and the one you can’t *miss*! We already know a great deal about the principle day when Jesus comes to set up His literal Kingdom – at His return – so when is the other day?

Did the disciples desire to see Jesus come and set up the Kingdom? **Acts 1:6**. Were they disappointed when, after He died, Jesus didn’t set up the Kingdom immediately? **Luke 24:21**. So they DESIRED to see Him set up that Kingdom – and they did not see it! Just as He prophesied! And yet He said His Kingdom would come and they just wouldn’t see it – so when and how did that happen?

How do you become a servant – or how do you acknowledge a King? **Romans 6:16**. Who does Jesus save? **Hebrews 5:9**. And how do you become one of His? **Romans 8:9**. And to whom does God give His spirit? **Acts 5:32**. Did Jesus promise it would be given at a certain time? **Acts 1:5**. And when did God give the spirit? **Acts 2:4**.

So you see, to have His spirit, you must obey Him! You must treat Him as your King in order to be given His spirit, and be considered “one of His” – that is, a part of His spiritual Kingdom! And that Kingdom BEGAN on the day of Pentecost in **Acts 2**. That was “ONE of the days of the son of man”, and the disciples MISSED IT! They were there, they watched it happen, but they didn’t realize it was the beginning of the spiritual Kingdom of God – the “type” of the real thing that you and I can participate in while we wait for the real thing to get here!

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

But you might be thinking, was Abraham left out of this new promise? Are we given access to the holy spirit, whereby we can be a part of the Kingdom of God today, and Abraham left out? The promises we read seemed to be physical promises – physical land, many children, and so on, but don’t forget Abraham was promised an ETERNAL inheritance (**Genesis 13:14-15**)!

Only an IMMORTAL person can inherit something FOREVER! So in order to inherit the Kingdom of God as promised to Abraham, *you must be able to abide there forever, and mortal man cannot do that!*

Can flesh and blood enter the Kingdom of God? **1 Corinthians 15:50**. Is our inheritance corruptible (prone to decay)? **1 Peter 1:4**. Can corruptible flesh inherit an incorruptible reward? **1 Corinthians 15:50**. In order to inherit the promises given to Abraham, what must happen to Abraham – and us? **Verses 52-54**.

Abraham could not inherit an eternal kingdom **without first becoming an eternal creature!** God knew this when He made the promise! And so for Abraham to inherit the Kingdom of God, Abraham had to first ADOPT the IMAGE and LIKENESS of God – back to **Genesis 1:26!** Really, it all goes back to that one verse, which more than any other encapsulates the plan of God!

And now to tie up the loose ends, read the key passage that ties these two promises together, the physical and the spiritual, **Ephesians 1:13**. Notice how it was AFTER you heard the GOSPEL, you trusted – had faith! The gospel is the gospel of the kingdom; it speaks of salvation through faith; the adoption into the family of Abraham – and thus adoption into the Family of God, the Kingdom of God.

Remember, the gospel was preached to Abraham! (**Galatians 3:8**). Whatever was a part of this gospel, was a part of the promise to Abraham! So (**Ephesians 1:13**) after they believed the gospel, they were sealed – branded – with the holy spirit OF PROMISE! Get that! The holy spirit was PART of the PROMISE of the gospel!

And what is the blessing of Abraham? **Galatians 3:14**. And how do we receive that blessing? (Same verse). The blessing of Abraham WAS THE SPIRIT OF GOD! And the promise of the spirit was GIVEN to him, BECAUSE of his faith – and WE can now take part in that very same blessing – whether Gentile or Israelite!

Last time in **Genesis 15:1**, we focused only on the physical promises God made to Abraham; but go back and read it again, because this verse is a SPIRITUAL promise, not just a physical one! God said “*I am your shield*” – and what is a shield? **Ephesians 6:16**. FAITH – faith in GOD – is your shield. Abraham’s faith in God gave Him this shield!

But the second part of **Genesis 15:1** is the key – God said “*I am... your exceeding great reward*” – it’s so easy to read over that and miss the MEANING there! God said “*\*I\* am your reward*”. GOD is the reward! But how is that possible? Only one way – God is the reward because He will give Abraham something *of Himself to live inside Abraham!* A piece of the divine nature IN him! God’s own spirit! *So literally, GOD was Abraham’s reward!*

Does Christ dwell in the true Christian? **Ephesians 3:17**. Are you now a temple of God? **2 Corinthians 6:16**. If you don’t have Christ’s spirit in you, are you even a Christian? **Romans 8:9**. What is your “hope of glory”? **Colossians 1:27**. What do these “exceeding GREAT” promises make possible? **2 Peter 1:4**.

Now go back and read **Ephesians 1:13**, but this time read it together with **verse 14** – do you SEE? The holy spirit “of promise” IS the earnest, the down payment *of our inheritance!* It is the COLLATERAL that God gives us, as proof that we will one day inherit IMMORTALITY and REIGN ON THE EARTH with Him!

The land was a reward, yes ... immortality a reward, yes ... but the **exceeding GREAT reward** God gave to Abraham, which reward can now be YOURS, was to have “*Christ in you, the hope of Glory!*”! To be a literal partaker of the divine nature!

This will finish the second part of your **Genesis 1:26** creation, by making you in the LIKENESS of God! So that *“His seed remains in you, and you cannot sin”* (**1 John 3:9**). To become a better person, a person with an incorruptible nature who will never be tempted to sin throughout eternity – that is the “exceeding great” promise God made to Abraham!

**Acts 2:39** *For the PROMISE is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

And the exceeding great promise God made to Abraham because of *his* faith, was offered to all his children – and through Christ is now made available to Gentile and Israelite children alike! So now all can partake of that same **exceeding great inheritance**, the inheritance of adoption into the Family and Kingdom of God! Good news, indeed!

**Revelation 21:7** *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.*

Now why haven't you heard THAT gospel preached? The next lesson will answer that question – you'll be shocked!

## *NOTES*

This work is completely non-denominational and is meant to fulfill Christ's great commission to "*preach the gospel to every creature*" (**Mark 16:15**). **This publication is not to be sold**; "*freely ye have received, freely give*" (**Matthew 10:8**).

The Bible tells us to PROVE ALL THINGS, and The Simple Answers encourages people to do just that. If you cannot PROVE what you believe, you have no right to believe it! Many of the things we print are shocking because they are different from what you've heard, but if something we say offends or upsets you, we hope you will take the time to set aside your preconceived ideas and PROVE your point from the Bible to see if you truly have been right all these years.

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