

How Religion
Deceives You About
**YOUR
INCREDIBLE
FUTURE**

by David C. Pack

Herbert W. Armstrong led the Worldwide Church of God (formerly The Radio Church of God until 1968) until his death in 1986. Hundreds of millions heard his voice and read his literature. God called him in the fall of 1926 and he was converted in the spring of 1927. Over the course of Mr. Armstrong's ministry, God revealed through him a great many true biblical doctrines, which had been lost to the Church through the centuries. After his death, his successors ceased to believe and teach these doctrines. Although copyright law prohibits The Restored Church of God from reproducing and distributing literature produced while he led the Worldwide Church of God, we are committed to the preservation and teaching of all of these truths!

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The truth of the gospel—God’s awesome *purpose* for man—has been withheld. It explains *why* you were born. It is incredible knowledge! It will leave you dumbfounded. This amazing knowledge is now revealed—along with the cover-up to suppress it!

Billions are now deceived. Previous billions have been. Even you have been lied to. A complete seduction has taken place, and all the world's religions have played a part in it. Knowledge of your awesome potential—*your incredible future*—has been kept from you!

Many wonder and worry about the unknown—and what their future holds. Others fear they do not even have a future. Still others fear that *civilization* has no future. You need never be in doubt about *your* future again—or of mankind's.

If only humanity knew what God has in store for it! Yet a deliberate suppression of the truth has withheld this knowledge from all but a few. You can be an exception. You can be one of the few who is *not* deceived!

The world has believed a false gospel for 2,000 years. It has generally supposed that Jesus Christ *is* the gospel rather than the Messenger *of* it. The Message—the centerpiece—of the gospel is *not* Christ. By focusing on Him—the Messenger—religious deceivers have been able to successfully suppress and cover up the Message that He brought!

The vital knowledge of how man could have solved his problems and understood God's Supreme Purpose has been withheld from the world, keeping it in darkness. Man does not know what he *is* or his reason for being. He does not know the way to abundance, peace and all the good things of life. The gospel would have shown mankind the solution to its most insoluble problems.

And yet, except for the apostle John, all the original apostles were *martyred* for teaching the truth of God's incredible purpose. Jesus was crucified because people did not want to hear His Message!

A correct understanding of the true gospel reveals crucial knowledge. It contains a dimension of understanding that cannot be discovered by scientific inquiry. This world's religions have suppressed it. Their theologians neither comprehend nor are willing to teach it. We will see that they have held back the great *key* that unlocks your purpose for being—YOUR INCREDIBLE FUTURE!

How did this happen? And who is behind this suppression of knowledge?

The Super Deceiver

To the unlearned, the Bible is a book of shocking statements. It reveals startling truths, completely unknown even to those who profess to understand it. But there are few statements more astonishing than that found in Revelation 12:9. This verse directly states that Satan the devil—who does exist—“*deceives the WHOLE world.*”

As “prince of the POWER of the air” (Eph. 2:2), Satan has influenced, guided, controlled and completely deceived the unsuspecting masses.

This is an absolutely staggering revelation—so much so that most simply ignore or reject it, believing that it cannot possibly be true. But it is in your Bible. And the entire world remains deceived about the fact that it is deceived!

The Origin of the Devil

Now for some history. Where did Satan come from? How did he become the way he is?

God originally created three archangels: Lucifer (who became Satan), Michael and Gabriel. Each ruled above hundreds of millions of angels (Rev. 5:11). Lucifer ruled the pre-Adamic world, deceiving one-third of the angels and rebelling against the government of God. Numerous passages explain this.

Let's read of Lucifer *after* he had become Satan. Isaiah 14:12-15 tells a remarkable story. It contains many clues about where Lucifer was once located, what he did and what happened to him. Read carefully, noticing the emphasis on key phrases: “How are you fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How are you *cut down to the ground*, which did *weaken the nations!* For you have said in your heart, I will *ascend into heaven*, I will exalt *my throne* above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the *sides of the north*: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; *I will be like the Most High*. Yet you shall be brought down to *hell* [the “grave”—see verses 9 and 11], to the sides of *the pit.*” (Learn much more by reading our booklet *Who Is the Devil?*)

Since his rebellion prior to the creation of man, Satan *has* greatly “weakened the nations” in both understanding and critical knowledge explaining God's purpose. His deception has been complete.

This World's God

The Bible also calls the devil the “god of this world”—another shocking revelation! This is what II Corinthians 4:4 states: “In whom the *god of this world* has blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the *light* of the glorious *gospel*...should shine unto them.”

Satan blinds the world to the true gospel for a personal reason. It describes the soon-coming kingdom of God—God’s world-ruling government. Of course, Satan seeks to block people from understanding this marvelous truth, not wanting “light” to shine on God’s incredible purpose for mankind. He wants humanity, collectively and individually, to think it *has no future!* Actually, the devil recognizes that the arrival of God’s kingdom means *he* will be banished from his current position (Rev. 20:2-3) of global influence as the god humanity unwittingly worships. He will no longer be permitted to deceive or weaken the nations. He also realizes he can never have what God has offered to men.

In John 12:31, 14:30 and 16:11, Christ refers to Satan as “the prince of this world.” These verses state that the devil will one day be judged. John 12:31 parallels the judgment of this world with Satan’s judgment. Why? Because this world *is his!* Paul’s inspired statement reveals that he is literally its “god.”

This is the plain truth from your Bible! Man’s civilization, with its cultures, ways and systems, is under the control of the devil!

Consider. If Satan has deceived the *entire* world, then this cannot *be* God’s world. (Also see I John 5:19.) And since the *whole* world is deceived, it is cut off from God. Deceived people do not know their purpose for being, and practice lives that reflect this ignorance (Isa. 59:1-2; Jer. 5:25).

We could ask: How can a single being deceive more than *seven billion people?* There are two primary ways.

First, Revelation 12:9 concludes with, “he was cast out into the earth, and *his angels* were cast out with him.” Notice that it says, “*his* angels.” These beings, which he leads, are referred to as demons (or fallen angels), and they assist Satan in his role of superdeceiver. Therefore, Satan does not work alone—he has millions of deceived spirit beings who help him.

But there is much more to understand. There is a second, equally important way through which Satan has so successfully deceived such vast numbers of people—and hidden their enormous potential from them.

Satan Has Ministers

Christendom is represented by hundreds of competing, fighting and differing denominations and sects. Supposed Christianity appears in every conceivable “shape, flavor, color and texture” of belief and custom. Most have assumed this is the natural state of affairs in the “Christian” world—that this is the way God must want it.

How wrong they are!

Put another way, this means that there are hundreds of thousands, and perhaps millions, of *clergy* who represent and teach the beliefs of this kaleidoscope of differing and disagreeing brands of Christianity. Most who attend these various churches have also assumed, therefore, that all *these* must generally be *God's* ministers—that they represent and teach what *God* wants taught. There could be no more dangerous—or plain *WRONG*—assumption!

Now here is yet one more shocking statement!

As the god of a completely deceived world, which must, therefore, include all the differing forms of Christianity *and* other religions, Satan has his own *agents*. He uses these agents to unwittingly spread his false doctrines. Yes, he has been able to achieve this almost universal success because he HAS HIS OWN MINISTERS! Of course, his agents—his ministers—are themselves deceived into believing that they are God's ministers. Some teach a few aspects of God's truth, but virtually *none* of His most important truths!

Now notice II Corinthians 11:13-15. The apostle Paul warned of the cunning with which Satan's ministers successfully deceive: "For such are *false* apostles, *deceitful* workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if *his ministers* also be transformed as the *ministers* of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."

This is a blunt, stunning scripture. Yet, it is true that Satan's ministers *appear* to be the ministers of God. Grasp this! Satan does not talk directly to human beings. He works through his servants—his ministers!

And here is the greatest deception of these false ministers: The devil uses them as instruments for spreading a false gospel about the *Person* of Jesus Christ—instead of His *Message* of the kingdom of God, the one that Christ brought. The most vital truth that the ministers, theologians and religionists of this world deny is the incredible potential that each human being carries.

The following verses continue Paul's description of the work of false ministers. They reveal the ongoing danger of Satan's agents seeking to penetrate the *true* Church to blind God's *true* servants a second time to the wonderful truth of the gospel and return them to darkness. Notice: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so *your* [the Corinthian brethren] minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that comes [speaking of false preachers] preaches *another Jesus*...or if you receive *another spirit*...or *another gospel*, which you have not accepted..." (11:3-4).

Paul warned of "another" spirit even entering the true Church. This very *different* spirit perverted both the truth about the gospel and the real Christ of the Bible. Historically, the counterfeit Christianity of today first appeared almost immediately after Christ's death and resurrection.

Also, ask yourself: If Christ *is* the gospel, then why cite "another *Jesus*" and "another *gospel*" as *two* separate doctrinal errors?

We will return to this.

New Testament Warnings

The New Testament contains numerous warnings of seducers, deceivers and charlatans who would try to enter the true Church and lead away followers into false doctrines. Most of the apostles, in one way or another, warned virtually every congregation of this danger. It is this same system of false Christianity into which most people have been born and spent their lives.

The apostle Peter warned of false teachers “among you (the Church).” Notice: “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be FALSE TEACHERS among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And *MANY shall follow their pernicious ways*; by reason of whom *the way of truth shall be evil spoken of*. And through *covetousness* shall they with *feigned words* make merchandise of you” (II Pet. 2:1-3).

These are strong words. Just as false prophets continually plagued ancient Israel, the Church has been assaulted through the centuries by “false teachers” who, through “feigned words,” seduced “many” into following them. The goal was to pull people from “the way of TRUTH.”

The apostle Jude, Christ’s younger brother, was equally direct in his warning: “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation...and exhort you that you should earnestly contend for *the faith which was once delivered* unto the saints. For there are *certain men CREPT IN unawares*, who were *before of old ordained* to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into *lasciviousness* [license to break God’s Law]...” (vs. 3-4).

This powerful indictment describes those who “crept in” and caused some to no longer fight for “the faith which was once delivered.” Notice it says that some of these imposters had been “before of old ordained.” Because *they* were ungodly, they taught others to break God’s Law as well. We will examine Acts 8 momentarily to better understand *where* these men came from. Their system and doctrines are far from new.

John recorded nearly an entire chapter of Christ’s own words of warning. Christ pulls no punches when describing the true nature of false leaders and teachers. Here are excerpts from that chapter: “He that enters not by the door into the sheepfold [the Church]...the same is a THIEF and a ROBBER...the shepherd [Christ and His faithful ministry] of the sheep...the sheep follow him: for they know his *voice*. And a STRANGER will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of STRANGERS...Then said Jesus...I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before Me are THIEVES and ROBBERS: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The THIEF comes not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*. I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd

gives His life for the sheep. But he that is an HIRELING...sees the WOLF coming...and flees: and the WOLF catches them, and scatters the sheep. The HIRELING flees, because he is an HIRELING, and cares not for the sheep” (10:1-13).

Take time to read this entire chapter. Notice the repeated use of the terms “wolf,” “stranger,” “thief,” “robber” and “hireling”—these latter are those who abandon the flock, pursuing self-interest. Throughout Church history, when enemies threatened God’s people, most ministers *did* abandon the flock, and many sheep *were* deceived and swept away from God’s Church and truth.

In addition to the Corinthians, Paul warned several other congregations. Here is what he told the Galatians after they had slipped into false doctrines: “You *did* run well; who did *hinder you* that you should not *obey the TRUTH*? This persuasion comes not of Him that calls you. A little leaven leavens the *whole lump*” (5:7-9).

The Galatians had gotten off track. They did not understand that a little false doctrine (“leaven”) eventually spreads (like leaven in bread) through the “whole lump” of God’s many truths. We will see that these Galatians were losing their understanding of the gospel.

The Mystery of Iniquity

Now turn to a warning Paul gave to the Thessalonians, in which he spoke of a “mystery of iniquity” that was already at work in the first century Church. The context there (vs. 3) also contains a description of events that would immediately precede Christ’s Return. A “falling away” and a revealing of the “man of sin...the son of perdition” would first have to take place before Christ’s Second Coming. He wrote, “For the *mystery of iniquity* does already work” (II Thes. 2:7). Paul understood that certain events were “already” in play in the Church then, just as they would come to be, once again, at the end of the age.

The book of Acts describes events in Samaria and sets up more facts to consider: “And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles...Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria...And there was *great joy* in that city.”

When the plain truth of God’s Word is preached to those whose minds have been opened, it does bring “great joy” (8:1, 4-5, 8).

Later, several verses reference one Simon the Sorcerer—often called Simon Magus by various church historians. He had tremendous influence in the predominantly Gentile area of Samaria. This man was a part of the *mystery system* of which Paul warned the Thessalonians (also see Rev. 17:5 and later in the booklet). This same powerful system, originally led by Simon, has continually sought to enter the true Church.

Now notice: “But there was a certain man, called SIMON, which beforetime in the same city used *sorcery*, and *bewitched* the people of Samaria, giving

out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries” (vs. 9-11).

The Bible explains what “word” Philip was preaching: “But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the KINGDOM OF GOD, and the name of JESUS CHRIST, they were baptized, both men and women” (vs. 12). Notice that these in Samaria were baptized only after “they believed” *this message*—the kingdom of God—not some other idea. Of course, they also had to understand Christ’s role as Savior.

Here is what Paul wrote to the Ephesians. This passage describes various offices Christ established within His New Testament ministry. It explains the purposes of those offices in edifying, unifying and perfecting the brethren of God’s Church. Notice: “And He gave some, APOSTLES; and some, PROPHETS; and some, EVANGELISTS; and some, PASTORS and TEACHERS; for the *perfecting* of the saints, for the *work* of the ministry, for the *edifying* of the body of Christ: till we all come in the *unity* of the faith, and of the *knowledge* of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, *tossed to and fro*, and carried about with *every wind of doctrine*, by the *sleight of men*, and *cunning craftiness*, whereby they lie in wait to *deceive*; but speaking the TRUTH in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ” (4:11-15).

This is another very strong and instructive series of warnings to God’s people. Christ intended that His sheep listen to true ministers and recognize false “winds of doctrine” that may be packaged in “cunning” and “crafty” ways.

Near the end of Paul’s ministry, just before going on trial for his life, he met with all the assembled elders in Ephesus. There was an emotional meeting, because he knew he would not see them again. He took time to remind them of their responsibility and of what he had repeatedly instructed them over a period of *three years*! The responsibility Paul described remains for God’s true ministry today.

Carefully note how Paul stressed the importance of his having preached the kingdom of God: “I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the KINGDOM OF GOD, shall see my face no more...Take heed...to all the flock...to feed the church of God...For I know this, that after my departing shall *GRIEVOUS WOLVES* enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also *of your own selves* shall men arise, *speaking perverse things*, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore *WATCH*, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one *night and day* with tears” (Acts 20:25, 28-31).

What Paul had warned of did happen. Heretics entered not only the Ephesian congregation but most of the rest of God’s Church and subverted it into false understanding and practices. Church historians commonly refer to the period from the mid-first century AD to the middle of the second century AD as the “lost century.”

During this period, the *visible* Church radically changed in appearance, becoming almost unrecognizable. True believers, who were in the small minority, were forced to flee the visible majority, which had departed into error. The knowledge of God's awesome purpose for human existence became lost to the overwhelming majority of those who were swept away into a false salvation.

Ever since the first century, when Christ established His Church, it has had to fight for the truth. God's people have always had to be careful—extremely vigilant—about the dangers of false ministers coming among them and perverting some or all of the doctrines of God. And these imposters always teach a false gospel. Remember, Paul warned the Corinthians that they had been “beguiled” into accepting “another gospel” (II Cor. 11:4). (Our book *Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!* covers this fascinating subject in detail.)

The Gospel—One True, Many False

The greatest single doctrine in the Bible is the knowledge of the true gospel. Understand. There is only one correct gospel. All others are perversions designed by Satan to replace the incredible truth of its Message. It is *this* enormous understanding that Satan's ministers always seem to pervert first.

At the very beginning of His ministry, Christ taught, “Repent you, and *believe the GOSPEL*” (Mark 1:15). But what *is* the true gospel? Is there more than one that God approves? The answers to these and other questions about the gospel are found in the Bible—and they are absolutely VITAL for you to understand. But the answers have remained hidden from the vast majority.

Thousands of new books on religion are published each year in America! And there are over *two thousand* separate denominations and sects in America, as well! Yet, there has never been more confusion and disagreement among professing Christians, or in the world as a whole, about the true answers to life's biggest problems. *WHY?* Why is there so much knowledge available, while at the same time so much ignorance of the truth about life's BIG questions? The answers to these questions have everything to do with the GOSPEL!

The vast majority have been taught—and believe—that the gospel is merely about the *Person* of Jesus Christ. Certainly, Christ's role is an extremely important subject, but He is *not* the gospel. The Bible shows that Christ is preached in conjunction *with* the gospel. Again, His role is vital to Christianity and must be understood, but He is *not* the gospel!

Some proclaim a “gospel of salvation” or “gospel of grace.” Others believe a “gospel of miracles” or a “social gospel” or a “gospel of foods” or “healing” or “faith.” Still others merely think of “gospel *music*” when they hear this word. These are all manmade ideas that ignore the truth of the Bible!

Let's return to Mark 1, and notice verse 14: “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the *gospel of the KINGDOM OF GOD.*” This is the gospel Jesus preached. And it was in the same context that He said, “Repent you, and BELIEVE THE GOSPEL.” Again, what gospel? The gospel of the

“kingdom of God.” Verse 1 refers to *this* message when it states, “The beginning of the gospel *of Jesus Christ*.” Christ’s gospel was about the KINGDOM OF GOD—not something else! One must believe *that* gospel, not a counterfeit or substitute. The world simply does not know of *this* gospel! (To learn more about this topic, read our booklet *Which Is the True Gospel?*)

Few comprehend. But why? Why do so few today grasp the awesome future of the Christian calling? Paul was inspired to explain: “But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, *the things which God has prepared* for them that love Him. But *God has revealed them* unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God” (I Cor. 2:9-10). Without God opening the mind, it is *impossible* to understand any of the things of God. It is also impossible to even come to God (John 6:44, 65). Quite literally, this verse states that God’s purpose has never entered man’s thinking!

God, for His own marvelous purpose at this time, has opened the truth of the gospel to a *very few*—and has put them into His Church. The rest of the world remains blinded. Understand this! The devil does not want human beings to enjoy what is forever denied to him—membership in the God Family.

Most will not wake up to the deception—the mass delusion—of a seduced Christianity that denies the plain truths of the Bible! God’s plan for mankind is staggering—incomparable to anything human beings have devised to replace it. The world ignores plain, clear scriptures found throughout God’s Word about the kingdom of God. This booklet explains the astonishing truth that so many ignore—and reveals what can be *your future!*

Strong Warning Not to Pervert

This subject is so important that God inspired Paul to issue this warning to the Galatians then and to us now: “I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto ANOTHER GOSPEL: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would *pervert* the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach ANY OTHER GOSPEL unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach ANY OTHER GOSPEL unto you than that you have received, *let him be accursed!*” (1:6-9).

This is a very strong statement! A little later, Paul stressed his hope that the “*truth* of the GOSPEL might continue with you” (2:5). So there is one *true* gospel—with all others *false*. You can now better understand Paul’s warning of Galatians 5:7-9, referenced earlier.

Although some assert that Paul taught a different or additional gospel, it is plain that he never did. Ironically, God used *Paul* to warn against ever allowing such false teaching by pronouncing a curse on man, angel or even any apostle—“But though *we* [apostles]...preach any other gospel”—who choose to violate this command (1:8).

What a powerful scripture—and WARNING!

Paul explained that the apostles were entrusted by God to preserve the true gospel. Notice I Thessalonians 2:4: “But as we were allowed of God to *be put in trust with the gospel*, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which tries our hearts.” That is a responsibility not to be taken lightly. *True* ministers must always teach what *God* commands, not what pleases *men* (including Bible “scholars”). So any claim that Paul taught a different or second gospel (usually thought to be *about Christ* or of “peace”) is impossible. He would have literally been pronouncing a curse on himself!

Jesus Was Prophesied to Bring the Gospel

Jesus came as a newscaster carrying an announcement. Everywhere He went He made the same announcement concerning a coming, world-ruling SUPER-GOVERNMENT to be established at His Return.

When speaking to a group of listeners in the desert, Christ explained His purpose—His responsibility. Notice how He explained His commission: “And He said unto them, I *must* preach the KINGDOM OF GOD to other cities also: *for therefore am I sent*” (Luke 4:43).

Matthew amplifies this: “And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people” (Matt. 4:23). Christ’s job was to take the message of God’s kingdom throughout the cities of Israel. He was “sent” for this purpose.

In the Old Testament, Jesus was prophesied to come as a MESSENGER. Notice Malachi 3:1: “Behold, I will send My messenger [John the Baptist], and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the MESSENGER [Christ] *of the covenant*, whom you delight in.” Christ was the “MESSENGER,” not the *message*. His message about God’s kingdom is the very core—the CENTERPIECE!—of the entire Bible.

Now compare the passage in Malachi with another: “The law and the prophets were until John [only the Old Testament scriptures had been preached before John the Baptist]: *since that time the KINGDOM OF GOD is preached*, and every man presses into it” (Luke 16:16). Recall that, in Mark, Christ preached the “kingdom of God” and called it the gospel.

Satan, who knew that Christ was foretold to preach the Message that he hates, sought, through King Herod, to kill Him in His infancy. This is also why the devil sought to tempt Him in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11). He knew if he could be successful in either attempt, he could thwart God’s Plan and retain power over the nations of the world.

Meaning of “Gospel”

The word “gospel” is an old English word meaning “god spell” or *good news*. The word “kingdom” is also an old English term, simply meaning *government*.

We may accurately say that Christ preached “the *good news of the government of God.*” We will learn the who, what, where, when, why and how of this GOOD NEWS and how it relates to the Bible’s greatest prophecy.

The word *gospel* is found 101 times in the Bible. Sometimes it is found alone, and sometimes “of the kingdom” follows it. Other times it includes “of the kingdom of *God*” or the equivalent phrase “of the kingdom of *heaven.*” Note that it says, “*of heaven,*” not “*in heaven.*” It is heaven’s kingdom and there is a big difference. Just as kingdom of God means God’s kingdom, not the kingdom in God, the same is true of the kingdom of heaven or *heaven’s kingdom.* This is critical to understand.

Throughout the New Testament, the word “kingdom” is found 27 times, “kingdom of God” 75 times and “kingdom of heaven” 34 times. All are clearly one and the same.

Now grasp this point. The subject of the kingdom of God is not only the dominant theme in the New Testament, but it is also the dominant theme of the ENTIRE Bible. Yet, incredibly, most know little or nothing of it. The ministers of this world’s churches are ignorant of the true gospel and never preach about it. Therefore, virtually the whole world stands in complete ignorance of the single greatest truth in God’s Word. And ALL those who once learned it must constantly beware lest it slip away (Heb. 2:1).

The Apostles Preached the True Gospel

What evidence is there that other New Testament writers preached this same message? A great deal!

Peter preached the kingdom. Notice: “For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting KINGDOM of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (II Pet. 1:11).

So did the apostle James: “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the KINGDOM which He has promised to them that love Him?” (2:5).

Matthew’s account mentions the term “gospel of the kingdom” three different times. Here is another example almost identical to 4:23, already quoted: “And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (9:35).

In most of His parables, Christ taught the basics of the kingdom of God. Matthew alone, mostly through parables, makes over fifty references to the coming kingdom of God.

Luke records that Christ commissioned His disciples to preach this same message. Notice: “Then He called His twelve disciples together...And He sent them to preach the KINGDOM OF GOD” (9:1-2). Soon after, He sent seventy others to preach, and they also carried the message of the “KINGDOM OF GOD” (10:1, 9).

John records Christ's words before Pontius Pilate on the night He was betrayed. This is an important clue to comprehend. Christ said, "My KINGDOM is not of this world [this *present society*]" (18:36). We will discover the details later of exactly *how* God's government will be established on Earth.

Recall that Philip, a deacon, preached the kingdom to the Samaritans (Acts 8:12). Notice that he preached separately the kingdom and Christ: "But when they believed Philip...concerning the kingdom of God, *and* the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

Philip not only preached the gospel of the kingdom, but he also differentiated it from the teaching about Jesus Christ. Take time to read this entire account. Remember, the messenger is not the message. Christ is *not* the gospel. However, He does stand directly *alongside* it and *will* rule the entire Earth when the kingdom is established in Jerusalem.

So then Luke, the writer of Acts, further differentiates between preaching about the *kingdom of God* and preaching about *Jesus Christ!* While both are vitally important, they are clearly two separate subjects!

We have addressed how some claim Paul preached a "different gospel." These are obviously unaware that it was Paul whom God used to pronounce a curse on anyone who did this (Gal. 1:8-9). We have seen that Paul preached the kingdom of God. However, you will notice two verses in Acts, which show that he did not neglect the second subject of Christ's role in the process of salvation.

First, let's establish that Paul preached God's kingdom to the Gentiles. Acts 19:8 states, "And he went into the synagogue, and spoke boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the KINGDOM OF GOD." There are many places in his epistles where Paul taught the kingdom to various Gentile churches. His message was always the same, continually preaching and referring to the kingdom of God.

Examine this from Acts 20:25: "I have gone preaching the KINGDOM OF GOD...repentance toward God, *and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*" (vs. 21). This account makes clear that Paul preached the same gospel—also alongside the role of Christ—to both Jew and Gentile. (The Ephesians were primarily Gentile converts.)

Next, notice chapter 28:30-31: "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the KINGDOM OF GOD, *and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ.*" Like Philip, Paul understood that the gospel and Christ were two separate subjects.

Finally, consider one more passage where Paul made a distinction between the gospel and the Person of Christ, by briefly referencing again II Corinthians 11:4:

"For if he that comes preaches *another Jesus*, whom we have not preached... *or another gospel* which you have not accepted, you might well bear with him" (the margin more correctly renders this last phrase "with *me*"). Paul urged the Corinthians to reject false teachers and to hold to what he had taught them. He

plainly distinguished the teaching of a *false Jesus* and a *false gospel* as two separate errors.

Again ask yourself: If Christ *is* the gospel, then why did Paul (four times) and Philip speak of them *as two separate matters*?

Every Old Testament Prophet Preached the Kingdom

Many have supposed that the gospel is exclusively a New Testament message. Nothing could be further from the truth! The Bible is literally filled with places, Old and New Testament, which describe various aspects and prophecies about the kingdom of God.

Let's consider an amazing statement by Peter found in Acts 3:19-21: "Repent you therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall *send Jesus Christ*, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of *restitution of all things*, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."

Notice that Peter refers to the Coming of Christ—"the presence of the Lord" (vs. 19), with verse 20 stating that God "shall send Jesus Christ." Verse 21 describes God's kingdom as the "restitution of all things." Peter stated that this "restitution" (Christ establishing His kingdom) is something that "God has spoken by...ALL His Holy Prophets *since the world began*."

This is a stunning statement! But is it true?

Could God have actually used *every one* of His prophets to announce His kingdom? Why do Bible scholars and religionists ignore this—or even reject it outright? Let's briefly survey the Old Testament.

The Pre-Flood Preachers

Jude wrote, "Enoch [Noah's great grandfather]...prophesied...saying, Behold, the Lord COMES with ten thousands of His saints to *execute judgment* upon ALL" (vs. 14-15). This obviously refers to Christ coming to establish a government, ruling ALL nations, with the help of the saints.

In II Peter 2:5, Noah is referred to as the "*eighth*...preacher of righteousness." Jude wrote that Enoch was the "*seventh* from Adam." Hence, Noah, next to follow him, is referred to as the "*eighth*." Beginning with Abel, and including Enoch, there were *seven other men* who previously held this role. These eight men's lives spanned the entire period between Adam and the Flood and they all preached the same message.

Careful review of Jude reveals that Enoch also preached about sin and righteousness. While much could be said about this sixteen-and-a-half-century period, suffice to say, all of these men spoke the same message. Remember, Peter said, "...since the world began."

Who else preached God's kingdom?

Abraham, Moses, Samuel and David

Is there evidence that the gospel was preached during the period *following* the Flood?

In Genesis 12:3, God said to Abraham, “In you shall *all families* of the earth be blessed.” This verse is also referenced in Galatians 3:8, but is phrased a little differently. There it says, “...in you [Abraham] shall *all nations* be blessed.” This same verse states that the gospel was “preached before unto Abraham.”

This is fascinating! Not only did Abraham have the gospel preached to him (almost certainly by Melchizedek—Christ), but it was also preached in Genesis, through *Moses’* writings, about Abraham! Now consider. How could *all* of the nations of the Earth be blessed unless Christ will have established His government on Earth?

While Moses was not a “preacher of righteousness” or an apostle, he *was* a prophet and a judge, and the first man that God raised up to lead Israel. Perhaps you have never thought of Moses as one who preached the gospel. Yet, the Bible reveals that he did, to ancient Israel, when they were in the wilderness. Like Genesis 12:3, Numbers 24:17-19 also refers to the gospel, with both recorded *by Moses*.

Acts 3:22 plainly states Moses foretold that God would raise up Jesus Christ as a great Prophet (Deut. 18:15) to preach to the whole world (Acts 3:23) at His Return! Most are only familiar with Moses leading Israel out of Egypt, and are completely ignorant of how God used him in this way.

Hebrews 3:9 and 4:2 also demonstrate that Moses preached the gospel to ancient Israel. “For unto us was the gospel preached, *as well as unto them* [ancient Israel]” (4:2). These verses, with Acts 3, show that this included the period all the way up to—and through—Samuel!

Acts 3:24 references Samuel as having preached the gospel. Notice: “Yes, and all the prophets *from Samuel* and those that follow after, *as many as have spoken* [meaning everyone], have likewise foretold of these days [the Coming of Christ and God’s kingdom].” These are clear and powerful statements. They cannot be glossed over. Take a moment to reflect on what you have read. This verse declares, “ALL God’s prophets...as many as have spoken...foretold of these days.”

Finally, while virtually everyone knows that David was a king, almost no one understands that he preached the kingdom of God. In Psalm 67:4, he wrote, “...for You [the Lord] shall judge the people righteously, and *govern* the nations upon earth.” This statement is a plain reference to God’s coming government.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel

The prophet Isaiah made plain statements about God’s kingdom, about how it would appear and bring peace to all nations on Earth. He also made clear

that God's kingdom involves *government*. Notice: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the GOVERNMENT shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His GOVERNMENT and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His KINGDOM, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even *forever*" (9:6-7).

This prophecy is so obvious that it needs no further explanation!

The prophet Jeremiah foretold, "Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that I will raise unto David a Righteous Branch [Christ], and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice *in the earth*. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His Name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (23:5-6; also read vs. 7-8).

As with Isaiah, these verses need no further explanation. Jeremiah gives a plain description of events that could only be described as the period *after* God's kingdom has come to Earth. So, he preached the gospel to the House of Judah.

The book of Ezekiel describes a time when God will gather His people from coming captivity. This is the period immediately after the Great Tribulation (Matt. 24:21-22)—the prophesied time of calamity on the modern descendants of ancient Israel. Now notice: "For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land" (36:24).

The next ten verses describe a period of rebuilding and prosperity that can only happen *after* Christ's Return. Take time to read them.

Daniel wrote this: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a KINGDOM, which shall never be destroyed and the KINGDOM shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand *forever*" (2:44).

Did this prophet preach the kingdom of God? The Bible answers *yes*—and we will see later that he did so in many other places!

All the Minor Prophets

With the possible exception of Jonah (who no doubt preached the gospel outside of his book), it can be shown that, in one way or another, all those often identified as the "Minor Prophets" preached the gospel of the kingdom of God. Remember, seeing the phrase "the gospel of the kingdom of God" is not the only way of describing the gospel! Genesis 12:3 and Galatians 3:8 have already shown this.

Review the following verses. In each case, you will find that they refer, directly or indirectly, to the kingdom of God: Hosea 2:16, 19; 3:5; Joel 2:21-27; Amos 9:11-15; Obadiah 21; Micah 4:1-3; Habakkuk 2:14; Zephaniah 3:14-20; Zechariah 14:1-3, 8-9; Malachi 3:1-3.

After reading these scriptures, it is obvious that Peter was right, and that "God *has* spoken by the mouth of *all* His holy prophets since the world

began...the restitution [restoration] of all things,” which can only occur with the coming of God’s government to Earth.

It is crucial to make one final point. Acts 3:21 states, “*God* has spoken by the mouth of...” The kingdom of God is a message *from God*.

It should be clear that it is *GOD* who speaks through whatever kind of servant He is using—prophet, patriarch, judge, deacon, preacher of righteousness, king, evangelist or apostle! If a man was truly His servant, God *always* spoke this *same message* through him—“since the world began”!

Is There a Separate Gospel of Jesus Christ?

As mentioned, Mark 1:1 speaks of “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” Let’s ask: Is the “gospel of *Jesus Christ*” a different—a second—gospel? Did Paul *forget* that there was another gospel besides the one about the kingdom?

The answer is an emphatic “No!” But most preachers teach that the gospel of Jesus Christ is *about* Christ, also claiming that He *is* the kingdom of God and that the gospel of the kingdom *is* Christ. We have seen that this is false, and completely unbiblical! The gospel of Jesus Christ is *His* gospel—*His* message about the kingdom of God!

We have seen that Jesus was a Messenger sent from God with an ANNOUNCEMENT! It was not about Himself—it was about God’s kingdom coming to reign over the entire Earth. In John 12:49-50, Jesus said, “For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which *sent Me*, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that *His* commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, *even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak*.” It should now be clear that Christ functioned as a messenger—as a SPOKESMAN for the kingdom of God.

In John 14:24, Jesus said, “the word which you hear is not Mine, *but the Father’s which sent Me*.” Christ brought the *Father’s* message—not His own. This should now be clear. Remember, He stated in Luke 16:16 that “The law and the prophets were [preached] until John: *since that time the kingdom of God is preached*.”

That is what this Work is doing today. Through this booklet, the truth of God’s kingdom is being preached to *you* and to thousands of others.

Defining a Kingdom

Many ask, “But exactly *what is* the Bible definition of a *kingdom*?” Preachers and theologians have tried to spiritualize this away because they have not carefully examined God’s own clear definition.

Turn to Daniel 2. This chapter is actually a lengthy prophecy symbolized by a giant metallic man composed of four sections (five elements), which represents four literal kingdoms. Take time to read this entire prophecy. It contains what the Bible means by the term “kingdom.” This explanation is found at the

end of verse 39, which refers to these kingdoms “which shall *bear rule over all the earth.*” These can only be described as *real* governments with *real* power over *real* people.

Some believe the kingdom of God is merely an idea in the “hearts of men.” This verse cannot be explained away as a reference to some nebulous, vague idea about a “kingdom in the hearts of men.” There is also no way to make God’s definition fit any particular church or churches. It speaks of rulership by governments with authority over *literal* nations on this Earth—and over *literal* people. Will you let someone tell you otherwise or will you believe God’s Word? Remember, the above kingdoms “bear rule over all *the earth.*”

Take note of two important aspects of the giant metallic image described in Daniel 2. They give insight into events prophesied to occur just before Christ’s Return. First, the metal *decreases* in value as we descend from the head to the legs and feet of the image. The quality of each succeeding kingdom/empire is *less* in value than the one preceding it. Second, the metal *increases* in strength as we descend the statue’s body. In other words, the power and scope of each succeeding kingdom/empire is *greater* than the one preceding it.

Finally, notice that the two legs of iron and the feet made of part iron part clay (vs. 32-33, 40-42) represent a kingdom that is divided. This depicts the Roman Empire, which was divided, with capitals at both Rome and Constantinople. Iron does not and cannot mix with clay, so this is a picture of final instability. When the feet break apart, the entire man will collapse.

Something amazing happens “in the days of these kings” (all the kings from Nebuchadnezzar to the seventh resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire). The coming greatest of all events removes all doubt about exactly WHAT the kingdom of God is. Also, that it happens “in the days of these kings” is God telling us WHEN it will happen. We read it earlier. Daniel 2:44 states, “And in the days of these kings *shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom*, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people [God will never allow people to seize control], but *it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms*, and it shall stand for ever.”

It is God, not men, who will establish the final and greatest world-ruling empire of all time. And He tells us that He will never allow men to intervene and disrupt it—that it will “stand forever.” This promise is SURE. But the world is blissfully unaware of the oncoming freight train of near-term, end-time events soon to strike it—whether men believe it or not!

The Woman of Revelation 17

Before continuing, we need to consider more about whole chapters of prophecy, which amplify Daniel 2.

Comparing Daniel 7 with Revelation 13 and 17 reveals that there are seven revivals of the Holy Roman Empire, with an eighth “diverse” head to emerge at the time foretold in Revelation. Six have come and gone—and the seventh

is now forming! The eighth revival will last exactly three-and-a-half years (Rev. 11:2, 3; 12:14; 13:5), with the fifth seal also involving the Tribulation and God's Wrath.

Understand another important connection to these resurrections of the Roman system. Revelation 17 describes each as having "a woman sit[ting] upon [the] scarlet colored BEAST, full of names of blasphemy, having *seven heads and ten horns*" (vs. 3). The seven heads are seven separate revivals, with a *ten-horn final revival* (composed of ten kings around a central figure—the Beast), constituting the eighth.

Of this woman, verses 5-6 state, "And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the *saints*, and with the blood of the *martyrs* of Jesus." Verse 1 calls her a "great whore that sits upon *many waters*..."

Let's pause and ask: What are the "many waters"? This is a classic example of allowing the Bible to interpret itself. Fourteen verses later, the term is explained: "And he said unto me, The *waters* which you saw, where the whore sits, are *peoples*, and *multitudes*, and *nations*, and *tongues*" (vs. 15). This shows that the whore's influence encompasses the Earth.

In this case, the term was not *immediately* explained, but simply continuing to read on revealed what it means. The Bible interpreted itself!

Verses 5-6 are a graphic description of what is today's great *Gentile church* that is a modern-day descendant of Babylon. She is a "mother" of many "harlot" daughters, who came out of her in protest because they disagreed with a few of her abominations. This is not a small church, but rather a "great" church ruling *many* peoples. Revelation 17 shows the return of this system but not the exact same church that of course will have disappeared long before when God's Kingdom first arrived. Verse 2 speaks of her "fornication" with the "kings of the earth." And verse 18 speaks of the woman as "that *great city*, which reigns over the kings of the earth." This is a huge system that has sought to influence nations and world events. Only one city fits this description over the last 3,000 years—Jerusalem—even though this system is *today* centered in another city.

This is a very *different* woman from the one described in Revelation 12, which is God's Church and has been persecuted by this great *false* church for almost 2,000 years (17:6).

Daniel 7:19-20 sheds more light on what happens when the saints rule with Christ from Jerusalem. Their first responsibility is to replace what Daniel calls the "fourth beast" (the final world-ruling empire). The *little horn* is a *religious* kingdom and leader soon to rise to unprecedented power in our time, and of the same system that produces the woman who rides the beast of Revelation 17. This system has ruled over all of the previous resurrections, or revivals, of the Holy Roman Empire. Again, two more revivals remain—one just before God's Kingdom and one more after.

The saints currently living across the world will soon face this “little horn”—who is the same as the “Man of Sin” in II Thessalonians 2:3-10. Some will be rewarded in an incredible way. Notice more from Daniel 7: “I beheld, and *the same horn made war with the saints*, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of Days came, and *judgment was given to the saints of the Most High*; and the time came that *the saints possessed the kingdom*” (vs. 21-22). After the seventh head is completely destroyed and Christ’s reign from Jerusalem begins, the Earth will enjoy many generations of peace. This will be interrupted by the short-lived eighth head, which God uses to punish a rebellious world that did not yield fully to the many wonderful blessings that came with His Kingdom and what should have been joyful obedience to the only way of life all human beings were created to live.

Revelation 17 and 18 reveal that God will destroy this whore and her harlot daughters, once and for all, by turning the beast she rides against her (17:16). But first she must “ride” the final resurrection of the Babylonian system!

Little time remains before the seventh revival of our time appears, with the wonderful kingdom of God to appear starting as a mustard seed (Matt. 13:31-32).

The Kingdom of God Is Coming

Make no mistake! With world conditions nearing the final crisis, no *human* could ever bring about a single, world-ruling government that would work. *Jesus Christ* will soon return and establish HIS kingdom.

The disciples did not understand *when* Christ would do this. He had to explain to them through use of a parable: “And as they heard these things, He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the KINGDOM OF GOD should *immediately* appear” (Luke 19:11). This long parable explains that much time would pass before it came.

Before His ascension into heaven, in Acts 1, after a series of meetings with His disciples, Christ met one last time with them. Until the very end, He continued to expound the kingdom of God to them. But they remained confused about *when* it would be established: “Until the day in which He was taken up... [He was] speaking of the things pertaining to the KINGDOM OF GOD... When they therefore were come together, they asked of Him, saying, Lord, will You *at this time* restore again the KINGDOM to Israel?” (vs. 2-3, 6). Christ explained, “It is not for you to know the *times* or the *seasons*...” (vs. 7). We cannot today know *exactly* when it will come, but we can know that it is close.

Now notice Daniel 7:18: “But the *saints* of the Most High shall take the *kingdom*, and possess the *kingdom* forever, even forever and ever.” Then, verse 22 states, “Until the Ancient of Days [Christ here, and the Father in verse 13] came, and judgment was given to the *saints* of the Most High; and the time came that the *saints* possessed the *kingdom*.”

Finally, notice verse 27: “And the *kingdom* and dominion, and the greatness of the *kingdom* under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of

the *saints* of the Most High, whose *kingdom* is an everlasting *kingdom*, and all dominions [rulers] shall serve and obey Him.”

Daniel knew that the *saints* will one day reign on Earth with Christ!

Jesus’ first recorded sermon, called “The Sermon on the Mount,” states that “the meek shall inherit *the earth*” (Matt. 5:5). Actually, Christ was quoting David, who recorded this in Psalm 37:11—another place where David proclaimed the gospel. The statement there is precisely the same. Other prophecies also demonstrate that David himself will one day rule over all the tribes of Israel, within the kingdom of God.

Notice three separate verses in Revelation. Christ is quoted through John, saying, “To him that *overcomes* will I grant to sit with Me in My *throne*, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His *throne*” (3:21). Also 2:26-27: “And he that *overcomes*...to him will I give *power over the nations*: and he shall *rule* them with a rod of iron.” Finally, “and has made us unto our God **KINGS** and **PRIESTS**: and we shall *reign* on the earth” (5:10).

Has organized religion told you about any of these verses? Almost certainly not. Yet they have been in the Bible for thousands of years.

No wonder that when Christ was on trial for His life, He said, “My **KINGDOM** is not of this world: if My **KINGDOM** were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My **KINGDOM** *not from here*” (John 18:36). In this exchange, Pilate had asked Him, “Are you a king then?” Christ answered, “*To this end was I born, and for this cause* came I into the world...” (vs. 37).

Jesus fully understood that He was born to be a King.

Christ to Be a King

Christ’s First Coming was to be a great event. Isaiah prophesied of His birth to a virgin: “Therefore the **LORD** Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a *virgin* shall conceive, and bear a *Son*, and shall call His name *Immanuel*” (7:14).

Before Jesus’ birth, an angel appeared to Mary to explain God’s purpose and what was about to happen to her: “And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin...Mary” (Luke 1:26-27).

Beginning in verse 30, Gabriel explains more about Christ and how He would eventually rule from the throne of David. Notice: “And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for you have found favor with God. And, behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name **JESUS**. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the **THRONE** of his father David: And He shall **REIGN** over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His **KINGDOM** there shall be no end” (vs. 30-33).

Christ was never in doubt about His life’s mission and purpose. This is why He *continually* preached the kingdom of God *everywhere* He went.

Isaiah spoke in more detail about how God's kingdom would spread around the Earth, eventually encompassing all nations: "And it shall come to pass *in the last days*, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and *all nations* shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come you, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He shall judge *among the nations*, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (2:2-4).

This identical prophecy is found in Micah 4:1-3. These passages foretell that God's kingdom will spread around the world. This is why one of Christ's parables likened the kingdom to leaven (Luke 13:20-21), which always spreads until it fills its host. The overarching purpose for your life is to participate in the future spreading of God's GOVERNMENT.

In front of the United Nations Building is the sculptured image of a large man forging a plow from a sword. I have seen it hundreds of times, because I conducted church services across the street from that spot for several years. But no one seems to any longer take notice of, or even believe, the amazing prophecy depicted by this famous sculpture.

Jesus Christ came to be a KING who will one day REIGN on the Earth. When He returns, suffering, misery, unhappiness and all the world's troubles and evils will disappear—and world peace will literally "break out," along with supreme happiness, harmony, prosperity and abundance for all nations. No human government has ever been able to bring these things to even one country on Earth. This is the core of the very gospel that Jesus brought.

Do you believe it? *Will* you believe it?

The Kingdom of God Must Still be Preached Today

In the Matthew 24 (and 25) Olivet Prophecy, Christ was asked about those events that would be the signs of His Coming to Jerusalem and the end of the world (age). He answered that a number of different trends and conditions would occur first.

One event preceding Christ's Return is described in verse 14: "And this *gospel of the kingdom* shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the *end* come." The true gospel was foretold to be preached until "the *end* come." This plainly means that *someone* will be preaching it *now*, in our present age, because the end has not *yet* come. But this will actually be done in the *fullest* sense after Christ returns.

Some history: The knowledge of the true gospel was restored by Herbert W. Armstrong (1892-1986). It had not been preached to the world for almost 19 cen-

turies until Mr. Armstrong began preaching it in January 1934. Understand! Not since the first century had the world as a whole heard this message. Throughout a 52-year ministry, until his death in 1986, God used Mr. Armstrong to reach hundreds of millions with this understanding. It was *this man* who taught me the true gospel and under whom I was trained to be able to take this same message to the world.

Remember, the end has not yet come. Therefore, The Restored Church of God is continuing this commission, boldly preaching this greatest of prophetic truths. The arrival of God's kingdom is sure—it is certain! When it comes, you too can be a part of it.

7,000-year Plan

Cut off from God by sin (Isa. 59:1-2), mankind has believed the lies of the god of this world for 6,000 years. The span of God's plan with men encompasses 7,000 years. Few have understood this. Many *have* correctly understood at least some little of the verses describing Christ's coming 1,000-year Reign, to begin at His Return to Jerusalem. But they know *nothing* of God allotting 6,000 years, or six millennial days of a "seven-day week," to man's rule, under Satan, prior to the seventh 1,000-year "day." We are very near the end of the "sixth day."

Let's understand! The Bible states, "But, beloved, *be not IGNORANT* of this one thing, that *one day* is with the Lord *as a thousand years*, and a thousand years as one day" (II Pet. 3:8; Psa. 90:4). Of course, most *are* "ignorant" of almost EVERYTHING that the Bible teaches.

Will you comprehend?

Man (under the invisible sway of Satan) has been given six "days," or 6,000 years, to try his own ways, governments, religions, philosophies, value systems and forms of education. Under the influence of Satan, he has practiced sin and disobedience to God's commands for all this time. He has then tried to treat all of the ill *effects* this has brought on, instead of the *cause*, which is the breaking of God's commandments. God is allowing humanity to learn hard, bitter lessons. The masses, who have never known the precious truth of God, must learn that their own ways do not work!

Soon the whole world will see the fulfillment of Daniel 2:44: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." Just as there is no doubt that countries today represent real, literal, physical kingdoms (nations with governments), there can be no doubt, from this verse, that God's coming government is also real and literal, breaking to pieces and replacing the kingdoms of man.

Jesus Christ was born to be a King who will rule all nations of the Earth forever with the help of other spirit-composed kings: "And out of His mouth

goes a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron...and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS” (Rev. 19:15-16).

Has anyone ever told you of these passages? I never learned of them or even heard of them in the church of my youth—and yet, here they are, written with unmistakable clarity of meaning for all who will heed.

Kingdom of God Explained

Matthew 6:33 states, “But seek you *first* the kingdom of God, and His righteousness...” If you seek something *first* in your life, you had better know what you seek. This chapter contains what many call “The Lord’s Prayer” (vs. 10). Christ instructs Christians to pray, “Thy kingdom come.” To properly do this, you must know what you are praying for.

The main purpose here is not to explain in detail the kingdom of God. It is to explain the definition of the *true* gospel and mankind’s incredible future. (To learn much more, read our booklets *What Is the Kingdom of God?* and *How God’s Kingdom Will Come – The Untold Story!*)

So let’s understand. The word “kingdom” simply means *government*. Of course, you cannot have a government without a nation to govern. Therefore, a kingdom is at least one nation with a government.

There are *four* necessary components to any kingdom: (1) Land, property or territory—however large or small. In other words, one must have a specific and definite set of boundaries constituting the *size* of the kingdom; (2) a ruler, king, monarch or governor leading the government; (3) people or subjects living within the territory; and (4) a system of laws and rules along with a basic structure of government. No kingdom is complete without all of these fundamental elements.

But how does this apply to God’s kingdom? Most do not understand the most basic elements of the kingdom of God. Is it a literal, physical place on Earth, with people and laws, presided over by a ruler? Some believe that the kingdom is merely something in the hearts of men. Others believe that it is wherever you find a particular church. Still others believe that it is Jesus Christ Himself. Many believe that it is here now and others believe that it is yet to come, but do not understand how this will occur.

We may ask: How does one actually *enter* the kingdom of God?

One Must Be Born Again to Enter the Kingdom

Paul wrote that Christ is “the *firstborn* from the dead” (Col. 1:18), and also “the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29). When connected, these verses show that Jesus is merely the *firstborn* from the dead, with many others to follow. But when, and into what, will they be born?

In John 3:3, Christ said to Nicodemus, “Verily, verily [this means truly, truly], I say unto you, Except a man be BORN AGAIN, he cannot *see* the kingdom

of God.” In verse 6, Christ continues, “That which is born of the flesh *is* flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit *is* spirit.” Simply believe the plain meaning of this verse. One must *become spirit* to *SEE* the kingdom of God. (Read our booklet *What Does “Born Again” Mean?* to learn more about this topic.)

Paul taught, “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God” (I Cor. 15:50). The next two verses explain that the resurrection will occur at the last Trumpet, when “the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be *changed*.”

Christ returns to Jerusalem when this last Trumpet blows. The remaining saints will be resurrected. (At His Return to Earth, some were already resurrected.) Do not misunderstand this climactic event. People who were once fleshly human beings will be changed into spirit—will be *born again*—and enter into the kingdom of God. No physical people can enter this kingdom.

John 4:24 states, “God is a Spirit.” Under the Father, Christ leads *His* kingdom, which is composed of spirit beings. At His Return to Jerusalem, Christ, as a member of the God Family, will have many younger “brothers and sisters,” who will have qualified to rule with Him.

Think of it this way: There is a plant kingdom, an animal kingdom, human kingdoms and an angelic kingdom. There is also the kingdom of God.

Now notice Genesis 1:26: “And God said, Let *US* make man in *OUR* image, after *OUR* likeness.” When referring to themselves, the One speaking says, “Us,” “Our” and “Our.” This is proof that there is more than one Being in the Godhead—there are presently two! In this scripture, the Hebrew word for God is *Elohim*. This is a uniplural term like *group*, *team*, *committee* or *family*. All of these represent one entity, comprised of several members or persons.

Thus, the Bible teaches there is one God, composed of two Persons—the Father and Christ—with many more persons to be added later. The first great time when God will add more sons to His Family is when His kingdom is established throughout the whole Earth. But entering God’s kingdom will not be automatic for anyone.

There Are Conditions to Entering the Kingdom

We read several places where Christ said only those who *overcome* will inherit the kingdom and rule with Him. There is more to being in the kingdom of God than just desiring it. There are qualifying **CONDITIONS** that *must* be met.

Jesus said to a young rich man who inquired about eternal life, “...if you will enter into life, *keep the commandments*” (Matt. 19:17). He explained one must keep the Ten Commandments to be saved, and specifically cited five of them.

Now what *is* sin? Since committing it results in death (Rom. 6:23), should you not know what it *is*? I John 3:4 records, “sin is the transgression of the law.” This is the same law that the young rich man was told he must obey to inherit eternal life.

Many *claim* to be Christian—to be followers of Christ. They *claim* to “believe on Christ” and *claim* to be “seekers of truth,” when they do not want

the real truth of the Bible at all. Notice this long exchange Christ had with the Pharisees: “Then said Jesus to those Jews which *believed on Him*, If you continue in MY WORD, then are you My disciples indeed; and you shall know THE TRUTH, and THE TRUTH shall make you free...but you seek to *kill Me*, because MY WORD has no place in you...But now you seek to kill Me, a man that has told you the truth, which I have heard of God...If God were your Father, you would love Me: for I proceeded forth and came from God...Why do you not understand My speech? Even because you cannot hear MY WORD...And because I tell you THE TRUTH, you *believe Me not* [yet it says they believed “on” Him]...And if I say THE TRUTH, why do you *not believe Me*?” (John 8:31-32, 37, 40, 42-46). Christ continues in the account by bluntly indicting those who would claim to be Christians when they are really “of (their) father the devil.”

Many assert that they “know Jesus” when they know nothing of the true Christ of the Bible. As He said, they literally “cannot hear” Christ’s words—the TRUTH—though they may think that they do: “He that says, I KNOW HIM, and keeps not His *commandments*, is a liar, and THE TRUTH is not in him” (I John 2:4). The world is filled with hundreds of millions of such “Christians,” professing a Jesus, but ignorant of the truth.

Many who are not *practicing* Christianity find their way into the true Church. But eventually they all leave. John continued, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” (vs. 19). I have seen this many times. Many seem to only believe “on” Christ, not really believing Him—that is believing what He said, and said to DO!

Recall Christ’s words in Mark 1:15: “REPENT you, and believe the gospel.” Repentance is *from sin* (Acts 3:19). A Christian is one who has turned from—repented of—his sins, and been baptized (2:38) and converted (3:19). Through a lifetime of overcoming sin, the Christian qualifies for (though he cannot *earn*) salvation and spiritual birth into the kingdom of God.

Your Incredible Future

Recall that God said that He made human beings in His “image” and “likeness.” This verse means what it says. God created *you* to become “like” Him in every way. Through His Spirit entering the mind of each of His newly converted children, a literal, brand new spirit life is begotten. At that moment, a tiny spirit-begotten “embryo” comes into existence. Just as little children grow up to look like their physical parents, so also do God’s children slowly take on the SPIRITUAL likeness of God (their Parent), in nature and character, as much as in image and form (II Pet. 1:4).

Both the Old and New Testaments make this point absolutely plain! While many have some vague understanding that Christians might, in some way,

be “sons of God,” none ever consider this: “Beloved, *now* are we the *sons of God*, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be LIKE Him; for we shall *see Him as He is*” (I John 3:2). Comprehend this staggering knowledge! We will one day have the very likeness of Jesus. Romans 8:16 states we are “children” of God and “heirs” *with Christ*.

King David also understood this a thousand years earlier when he wrote, “As for me, I will *behold Your face* in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I *awake*, with YOUR LIKENESS” (Psa. 17:15). Incidentally, this verse dispels the delusion of the popular “beatific vision” idea—that people will not actually *see* God’s face in the afterlife. David understood that we *will* see God—and face to face. So did John. Both knew that at the Resurrection—when we “awake”—we will be exactly like God, in form and character.

So then, God is actually reproducing Himself in people who have received His Holy Spirit. He is creating children that will *look* and *be* just like Himself!

It is the very Spirit of God in us that will allow us to awake in the Resurrection. Notice Romans 8:11: “But if the *Spirit* of Him that *raised up Jesus* from the dead *dwell in you*, He that raised up Christ from the dead *shall also quicken your mortal bodies BY His Spirit* that dwells in you” (also I Cor. 15 and I Thes. 4:13-18). Christ was *raised* to return to His position alongside God the Father. He had fulfilled His task of becoming Savior.

Now, understand! The same Spirit, dwelling in us from the moment of conversion, will raise us (all those begotten of God) to join God in His kingdom.

Like the newly begotten baby grows in its mother’s womb, the Christian must also *grow* before he can leave the womb. Peter wrote, “But *GROW* in *grace*, and in the *knowledge* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (II Pet. 3:18). Christians are to grow in this lifetime. In order to be given divine authority and power, as joint-heirs with Christ, they must qualify, through the building of God’s holy, righteous character in their lives.

Paul explained that the role of faithful ministers in the Church is to feed the flock. Jesus said, “I will build My Church” (Matt. 16:18). It is the Church—THAT Church—which is “Jerusalem above...the *mother* of us all” (Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22-23). Like any mother, the Church nurtures and feeds her children—and she has been doing this for 2,000 years.

An Astonishing Scripture

The book of Hebrews reveals God’s awesome purpose with crystal clarity. The context begins in chapter 1. Watch the picture of salvation unfold.

First, understand that God created angels to be “ministering spirits” to assist the “heirs of salvation” (vs. 14). This is their role within God’s Plan. Angels are not offered membership in the Family of God. This is why Satan (as a fallen angel) so hates the idea that puny, little, fleshly man can receive what he has never been offered nor can achieve.

Paul quotes two places in the Psalms: “For unto which of the angels said He at any time, You are *My Son*, this day have I begotten you? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me *a Son*?...” (vs. 5). God has never said this to any angel!

Paul quotes another Psalm, explaining what has always been God’s purpose: “Your THRONE, O God, is forever and ever: a *scepter* of righteousness is the *scepter* of Your KINGDOM...” (vs. 8). A scepter is a rod or staff used as a symbol of rulership or authority—and in His kingdom it is God who has all power.

Finally, Paul re-frames the same question about angels: “But to which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” (vs. 13-14).

This sets the stage for what we must understand! Let’s really *comprehend* the incredible future that God has prepared for all those who serve Him.

An amazing series of verses continues in chapter 2. Paul quoted David (from Psalm 8:4-6) when he asked the all-important question, “*What is man, that You are mindful of him?*” (Heb. 2:6). Since God is eternal, and sits over the entire universe and has all power under His control, it is no wonder David asked, and Paul repeated, this most central question of life.

The astounding answer begins in the next verse: “You made him [man] a little lower than the angels; You crowned him with glory and honor, and did set him *over the works of Your hands*.”

God will eventually share rulership of His entire creation with His Sons. Again, Christ is merely the first of many Sons. The birth of a firstborn son does not preclude the birth of additional sons (and daughters) to that same family. I have two sons and am a firstborn son with a younger brother. My father was a secondborn son, having an elder brother and so on. You see the point.

Paul goes on to explain that God plans to give enormous power and *authority* to His Sons: “You have put ALL THINGS in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left NOTHING that is not put under him. But now we see *not yet* all things put under him” (vs. 8). This has not *yet* happened—but it will soon.

When God says that “all things” will be put under the feet of man, that is what He means. The vast universe, with all of its quadrillions of stars and one trillion galaxies, will be put under the authority of men who have been born into the Family of God. In fact, the Moffatt translation renders the Greek word for “all things” as “THE UNIVERSE.”

This is truly staggering knowledge! Take time to grasp it! Savor what can be YOUR future!

Before continuing, consider a fascinating verse about another related aspect of salvation not understood before. We have seen that Christians await a truly awesome salvation. But, the entirety of creation is also intensely awaiting the appearing of those new sons to be added to God’s Family. Carefully read the following verses from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible:

“For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for *the creation* [all things in the known universe] was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of Him who subjected it in hope; because *the creation itself will be set free* from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the CHILDREN OF GOD. We know that the *whole creation* [everything] has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only *the creation*, but we ourselves [Christians], who have the *firstfruits* of the Spirit [the FEW now called], groan inwardly as we wait for [*birth*] as sons” (Rom. 8:19-23).

All future “sons of God” will be liberators of a creation now in bondage, and foretold to grow much worse. A decayed and wounded Earth, sun, moon and stars—the universe!—will soon be renewed and returned to a state of beauty, harmony and tranquility under the leadership of Christ and the resurrected saints.

“Bringing Many Sons Unto Glory”

Now we can continue the all-important account in Hebrews 2: “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with *glory* and *honor*; that He by the grace of God should *taste death for every man*. For it became Him, for Whom are *all things*, and by Whom are *all things*, in bringing *MANY SONS UNTO GLORY*, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (vs. 9-10).

This passage reveals the staggering potential planned for all Christians. When Christ returns, Paul reveals that it will be “MANY SONS” who are brought “*unto glory*” through the “Captain of our salvation” (vs. 10).

Verse 11 states that Christ “is not ashamed to call them [the other many sons—us] brethren.” These are all those of whom Christ is called the “*first born*.” Truly, the begotten person has been called to “glory” and to be one of “*many sons*.” It is Christ’s suffering and sacrifice that allows Him to be the “Captain of *their* salvation”—and potentially *yours*!

What an incredible future for those whom Christ “calls...*brethren*.” Now notice this final verse: “For both He that *sanctifies* and they who are *sanctified* are all of one: for which cause He is *not ashamed to call them brethren*” (vs. 11). Christ and the saints share the same salvation.

This verse shows that Christians are “sanctified” (set apart). How? John stated, “Sanctify them [begotten Christians] *through Your truth: YOUR WORD IS TRUTH*” (John 17:17).

The cherished traditions and fables of men, about life after death or anything else, collapse under scrutiny. Christians, having come out of a deceived, confused world, are set apart from the world by the TRUTH!

If Christ is “not ashamed to call them (us) brethren,” then we, God’s begotten sons, must not be ashamed to defend the very truth that sanctifies us—and the truth of the gospel (Phil. 1:17). We must “grow up” unto Christ (Eph. 4:13) and hold to the true doctrines of God. We must QUALIFY to one day stand beside Christ over “all things.”

Do you see what is described here? The incredible goal of a Christian is to be born into the kingdom of God—to become a spirit being RULING under Christ, as a very Son of God. What could be more wonderful—more GLORIOUS!—for a Christian to look forward to?

Christ Returns

Matthew 24:27 states that when Christ returns to Jerusalem, His Coming will be like lightning shining from the east to the west. This will be an earth-shattering event, impossible to miss.

Daniel spoke of Christ coming in the “clouds of heaven” (7:13). Before His Return, God officially grants Him AUTHORITY to rule the world. The saints cannot be given authority with Christ until He is given authority first. Only then can He give power to others. Notice: “And there was GIVEN Him [Christ] *dominion*, and glory, and a KINGDOM, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His KINGDOM that which shall not be destroyed” (vs. 14).

No wonder Christ stated, “And he that overcomes, and keeps My works unto the end, to him will I give *power over the nations*: and he shall *rule them* with a rod of iron...*even as I received of My Father*” (Rev. 2:26-27) and a few verses later, “To him that *overcomes* will I grant to sit with Me in My throne...” (3:21). When Christ returns, the saints will rule with Him!

But the Christian’s responsibility in this life is to QUALIFY to be part of God’s kingdom.

Will that include you?

Your Awesome Future

The following is Herbert W. Armstrong’s conclusion to his booklet *Your Awesome Future – How Religion Deceives You*:

“At His return to earth in power and glory those who have been converted and received God’s Holy Spirit shall be born into the God Family by a resurrection. Then the *entire universe* will be put into subjection UNDER them!

“Then, from Romans 8, *if we have and are led by the Holy Spirit of God*, we shall be raised to Spirit composition and immortality in the God Family even as Christ was in A.D. 31 upon His resurrection.

“Now once again from verse 19, ‘for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God’ (RSV). This shall happen at the time of the resurrection, when those who are human actually become—by resurrection or instantaneous *change* from mortal flesh to Spirit immortality—sons of God.

“Now understand please. *Why* should the whole universe—the creation—be waiting with *eager longing* for the actual birth and appearing of all these sons of God, to be born into the Family of God? The following verses portray a universe filled with planets in decay and futility—yet as if subjected *now*

to this dead state in hope! ‘Because the creation itself [the universe not now capable of sustaining life] will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God...

“This passage indicates precisely what all astronomers and scientific evidence indicate—the suns are as balls of fire, giving out light and heat; but the planets, except for this earth, are in a state of death, decay and futility—but not forever—*waiting* until converted humans are BORN the children of God; born into the very Divine Family of God, forming the Kingdom of God.

“Jesus’ gospel was the Kingdom of God. Christ’s gospel of the Kingdom actually includes all this knowledge here revealed—even the whole universe is to be ruled by us, who, with God the Father and Christ, become the Kingdom of God.

“God is first of all Creator, but God is also Ruler. And He is Educator, who reveals knowledge beyond and outside the scope of the human mind of itself to comprehend!

“Put together all these scriptures in this booklet, and you begin to grasp the incredible human potential. Our potential is to be born into the God Family, receiving total power! We are to be given jurisdiction over the entire universe!

“What are we going to do then? These scriptures indicate we shall impart life to billions of dead planets, as life has been imparted to this earth. We shall create, as God directs and instructs. We shall rule through all eternity! Revelation 21 and 22 show there will then be no pain, no suffering, no evil, because we shall have learned to choose God’s way of good. It will be an eternal life of accomplishment, constantly looking forward in super-joyous anticipation to new creative projects, and still looking back also on accomplishments with happiness and joy over what shall have been already accomplished.

“We shall never grow tired and weary. Always alive—full of joyous energy, vitality, exuberant life and strength and power!

“What a potential!”

The following literature expands on topics discussed in this booklet:

- Where Is the True Church? – and Its Incredible History!
- What Does “Born Again” Mean?
- What Is the Kingdom of God?
- Which Is the True Gospel?
- Who Is the Devil?
- *Who* or *What* Is the Beast of Revelation?

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