

Section I: The Big Picture

1. Kingdom Now?

There are some, like the Pharisees of old, who foolishly believe that there could be no kingdom of God on earth unless Messiah personally and physically sits on a throne in Jerusalem. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, saying, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.” (Lk. 17:20-21) Those who insist on having a Messiah on a throne in Jerusalem before they will embrace the kingdom of God will one day find they have ultimately bowed to Satan. (2 Ths. 2:4)

There are others who, in complete contrast yet equally foolishly, believe it is their responsibility to “build the kingdom” and have it in such a state of readiness that the Messiah need only return and take over the “reins of their government.” Such as these will undoubtedly and excitedly turn over these “reins” to anyone who seems to match their expectations and who seems to be, at least to them, the “right” Messiah and these will also ultimately bow down and serve Satan thinking they are serving God. (Jn. 16:2)

When we examine the New Testament, we find that these views, as foolish as they are in their extremities, have elements of truth embedded within their tangled webs of deception and over-emphasis on particular points. Jesus plainly taught His disciples to pray (Lk. 11:1-2) and plainly told His disciples to routinely and regularly pray that God’s kingdom, His will, would come on earth as it is in heaven. (Mt. 6:10, Lk. 11:2) Those “theologians” who would split “the fine hairs” between the will of God and the kingdom of God in this instruction have lost sight of what a kingdom is, a definition that can be found in any common dictionary – a realm or region where the will and wishes *of the king* are performed by the subjects and citizens of that realm or region.

Loisy’s is an accurate and important observation to make – that Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God but it was the “church” that came into prominence. When Jesus came, He did not discuss the “church.” In the first place, “church” is an English word that did not come into existence until some 1500 years after He was gone! But even the word that is poorly translated as “church” (Greek *ekklesia* [1577]) is not likely to have been used by Jesus. Consider that the Greek word *ekklesia* is found in only *one* gospel, occurring only *three* times in *two* verses (Mt. 16:18, 18:17) and on this scant basis, some “theologians” have made ridiculous statements that “the church” is therefore a dominant theme in Matthew’s gospel! But the reality is that there is no evidence anywhere that Jesus ever spoke any Greek. Perhaps He knew a few simple words and phrases but as one sent only “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Mt. 15:24), Greek studies would not likely have been very high in His priorities. (also see Jn. 7:15) When Jesus said these two sayings as recorded in Matthew, He almost certainly spoke them in Aramaic and probably used a word that would be more accurately translated as “temple,” a picture Paul later used as well. (1 Cor. 3:16-17, etc.) It’s not really a bad thing that Matthew did as there are valid applications here but it’s just not an historically accurate thing.

But we must recognize that it is *Matthew* (unless we want to assign it to some very early copyist, a theory for which there is no proof) who inserted *ekklesia* into Christ’s teachings here – just as it is Paul, Luke, the writer of Hebrews, James and John – *in their letters* (“epistles”) and not in their gospels – who made moderate, even limited usage of the word *ekklesia*, a word which appears only some 112 times in the Greek New Testament from Acts to Revelation. We do not, however, need to presume or invent any sinister or conspiratorial motive behind this

insertion. Ekklesia indeed contains many parallel insights and is a beautiful, although incomplete, picture of what Christ is building in His people. And because “ekklesia” (which would devolve into “church”) was a word which would be subject to change and thus deception, perhaps Christ simply avoided it entirely, leaving it to His followers to bring the word into usage. However it came into usage, the ekklesia is the *people* called out of this world’s darkness, transferred or conveyed into the kingdom of light so as to attend to the affairs and needs of Christ’s kingdom (Col. 1:13) and the kingdom of God is that realm where Christ is actually and literally obeyed as King, Lord and Master. From these two definitions it is easy to see how they overlap, consisting of the same people and yet having very distinct emphases. And we are also able to see how our obedience to God is the very means by which the kingdom of God comes into our lives. (again see Mt. 6:10)

It is this simplicity of the gospel of the kingdom of God that has been lost because the “church,” instead of the kingdom, came into being and took the prominence and preeminence that did not belong to it. The “church” as we know it today is simply the latest expression of the Great Prostitute, Mystery Babylon or one of her prostitute daughters. The “pastor” and all the pagan Greek customs that infiltrated into Christianity in the 2nd and 3rd centuries and that are still routinely practiced today is simply the abominations that attend these “women.” (see Rev. 17:5)

Christ is returning for a bride who is “a glorious ekklesia, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, holy and without blemish.” (Eph. 5:27) He is *not* coming for a prostitute who is disgusting in her filth and abominations. Anyone who is immersed in and involved with the latter can expect to receive the judgments of God. (Rev. 18:4) It is the *kingdom* and not the “church” (not even the ekklesia – the Greek word misrendered in English as “church”) which we must be diligent to enter into (Acts 14:22) and any expression of genuine ekklesia must truly service the kingdom of God – and not the kingdom or fiefdom of some man – or else it is only a counterfeit work of men and demons.

In addition, we also know that God’s kingdom is *spiritual*. Paul wrote, “The kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” (Rom. 14:17) Paul also wrote, “The kingdom of God is not in word but in power.” (1 Cor. 4:20) The kingdom of God, quite simply, is that realm where Christ is truly obeyed and served as King – this obedience being characterized by acts and works of righteousness, peace and joy initiated, instigated and accomplished in obedient cooperation with the Holy Spirit. Any gathering of men who merely talk about righteousness, peace and joy or who utilize some other spirit to maintain a façade of these things is merely the counterfeit “church,” the apostasy that occurs before Christ’s return. (2 Ths. 2:3)

From all this we must conclude that Christ’s kingdom may, even *must*, be entered into now. The narrow path that leads to life (Mt. 7:14) is the way of obeying Christ the King as He is “the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.” (Heb. 5:9) Those who practice any form of “Christianity” that does not adhere to His literal and actual Kingship (which most “churches” do not but merely give Him lip service, a nominal title and a figurehead position) is simply a portion of the kingdoms of this world which lie under the control of the devil. (1 Jn. 5:19, Eph. 2:2)

One can – and should – study out the many aspects of the kingdom of God as written in the New Testament but unless the Spirit of truth guides the seeker and the seeker submits to the rule of Christ as King, all such research will be fruitless, deceptive and even dangerous to the soul. Knowledge of this subject, especially when the kingdom truths are used to support and

justify “church” errors and deceptions, will cause one to believe all manner of lies and distortions as the misguided seeker is propelled down the broad road that leads to destruction. (Mt. 7:13)

The kingdom of God is not to be measured in miles nor can it be represented on a map. It is a spiritual condition that is unlike any that the world can concoct, manufacture or imagine. It is a kingdom of light and love (Col. 1:13), a kingdom of truth (Jn. 18:37) and goodness. (Tit. 2:14) The King is Himself “the way, the truth, and the life” and “no one comes to the Father [the Most High Creator-God] except through Him.” (Jn. 14:6) To be in the kingdom of God is to be on a spiritual journey where one works, prays and trusts to be “doing it” better than yesterday, that is, working, praying and trusting to listen and obey better tomorrow than yesterday or even today, a journey that leads to ever-increasing abundant and eternal life. To be a citizen of the kingdom of God is to simply live as spiritual children of light in a dark and perverse world. (Eph. 5:8-10, Phlp. 2:15)

When we address the question of “God’s kingdom now,” we must recognize that it is indeed the current reality which we must seek first and foremost. (Mt. 6:33) Yet we must also recognize that the visible “ministries” that men can build and are building are *not* likely to be the kingdom of God but are instead most likely only the kingdom or fiefdom of some mere man. The kingdom of God is invisible to the human eye and its movements and activities are most comparable to the wind. (Jn. 3:8) So while we must seek and even strive to enter this invisible spiritual kingdom, we must also take care that we are not deceived by frauds and charlatans who twist and distort and use these intangible qualities to gain followers for themselves. You, the reader, are alone responsible for where your life goes – and you alone will reap the rewards or judgment for what you do.

“Without holiness no one will see the Lord.” (Heb. 12:14) “Those who perish [do so] because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” (2 Ths. 2:10) “God ‘will render to each one according to his deeds’: eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness – indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek (Gentile); but glory, honor and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God.” (Rom. 2:6-11)

These clear-cut lines are found readily in the New Testament even as they are blurred, neglected, rejected and even denied at many “churches” and in many “ministries” of mere men. Yet they remain as the standard by which God views every man. Truth, righteousness, love, all the attributes and characteristics of God, must be progressively reproduced and demonstrated in our lives or else we are citizens and participants of the wrong kingdom. As Jesus warned His disciples regarding the sign of His return: “Take heed that no one deceives you.” (Mt. 24:4) Long ago men rose up preaching a distorted gospel and drew followers after themselves. (Acts 20:30) These men were called “bishops” and they were, and still are in many cases (especially under the more modernly palatable title “pastor” or, in other equally deceived circles, “apostle” or “prophet”) the leaders of the “church.” The call is now resounding to “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Cor. 7:1), to “Come out from among [the ‘Christian’ idolaters] and be separate,” to not touch what is unclean so that we may be received by the Lord. (2 Cor. 6:17, 1 Cor. 5:10-11)

Those who obey and persistently endure to the end are those who will be saved. (Mt. 24:13) And it is this gospel of the kingdom of God that “will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations” before the end of this age comes. (Mt. 24:14) The choice will be to

obey the gospel of the “church” or the gospel of the kingdom. One will result in death whereas the other will result in life. Choose wisely, dear reader – choose life. Bow now to the King of life, truth, love, light and goodness that you may live abundantly and eternally from this day forward. If you refuse to bow to the Lord of life, truth and love, then know that you are already bowed down to another lord and you are demonstrating your preference for death, lies, hate, darkness and evil – and you should not be surprised therefore that He will give you over to what you desire and prefer.

“This is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.” (Jn. 3:19-21)

There is no darkness greater than the religions of men that prevent them from truly entering and vitally participating and functioning in God’s kingdom of light.

Let he who has ears hear.

Introduction:

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Chapter 2: Through the Looking Glass

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