

Responding To The King

Gospel Reign Of King Jesus: Shelf 6 — Volume 53

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The first response on the first day of the first gospel presentation was recorded in Acts 2:37: *“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart.”* What cut the people to the heart, **was not** preaching on the crucified incarnate Son of God. It **was not** the fact that this crucified Son of God was raised from the dead, which was consequential to His crucifixion. The message that Peter preached on the A.D. 30 Pentecost was the good news (gospel) of the kingship of the resurrected, ascended and reigning King Jesus on the throne of David: *“Let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this same Jesus whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ”* (At 2:36).

So we go back in Peter's presentation where he reminded the “crucifiers” that *“Jesus of Nazareth was a Man approved by God among you”* (At 2:22). He reminded the Jews who stood before him that they used the lawless hands of Roman executioners to have this Jesus crucified (See At 2:23). And then he reminded the people of all the prophecies that they already knew. He quoted Psalm 16:6-11. David had declared a well-known prophecy that God had sworn to him that He would raise someone from the dead who would sit on his throne. So Peter added, *“This Jesus God has raised up to which we all are witnesses”* (At 2:32). This is the message that cut the Jewish audience to the heart. God had fulfilled what He had promised to David, that One, the Messiah, would eventually sit and reign on his throne, the throne of God.

Preaching of the preceding subject leads to the subjugation of people around the world who would be disciples of King Jesus. And from a spirit of subjugation, people are cut to the heart and cry out what they must do to be saved before this King (See At 2:37). It is here, therefore, that we start on our journey to remind ourselves and the world that there is a King presently seated in heaven on David's throne before whom every inhabitant of the world should bow, and eventually give account in judgment.

Chapter 1

• THE THRONE IS PRESENTLY OCCUPIED •

Several important prophecies were made in the Old Testament concerning Jesus' reign on David's throne. This is a vital subject simply because many religious groups throughout the world refuse to recognize this fact. Therefore, faithful subjects of the kingdom must thoroughly understand that Jesus of Nazareth is presently King of kings and Lord of lords. He is reigning over the galaxies from the throne of God in heaven.

Concerning the Old Testament prophecies of this presently occurring fact, the angel Gabriel revealed to Mary while in her pregnancy with this King, ***“He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David”*** (Lk 1:32). Those who uphold that this promise to Mary, that it has been fulfilled, **affirm that Jesus is presently reigning on David's throne as was prophesied in the Old Testament.** This fact is here affirmed by Gabriel. However, there are those who affirm that Jesus' reign on David's throne is still something that is yet to occur in the future when Jesus comes again. But as we study through the Bible concerning this subject, the only valid conclusion is that the word of Gabriel has already been fulfilled.

Nevertheless, it is supposed that Jesus will come in the future with the purpose of setting up some earthly

kingdom reign on this earth. This earthly reign will supposedly fulfill all prophecies concerning Jesus' present reign on David's throne that Peter proclaimed on the A.D. 30 Pentecost over two thousand years ago. Those who deny what Peter preached then do not deny the fact that it was prophesied in the Old Testament that Jesus would sit on David's throne. They simply contend that the throne is literal and that Jesus will literally sit on this throne in Jerusalem for a period of one thousand years.

But the Bible teaches that Jesus is now reigning as King of kings on David's throne. This is a spiritual rule from heaven over a universal kingdom of all things that extends far beyond this world. Prophecies in the Old Testament concerning this reign have already been fulfilled, for Jesus has already ascended to the right hand of the Father in order to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords.

So we begin our investigation into this matter with the word "**throne**." The word "throne" in prophecy and fulfillment concerning the reign of God in any dispensation, is used in a **metaphorical** sense. The literal Davidic throne of Israelite kings on earth in the Old Testament represented **something that was greater than the throne itself**. When we talk of the "throne of England," no one supposes that we are discussing a literal chair that is in the palace of London. When we use the word "throne," therefore, the meaning is in reference to **the authority of the throne**, not the literal chair of the throne. This is the meaning that should be understood when talking about the throne of David, both in the Old Testament, as well as in fulfillment of prophecy in the New Testament.

In the Old Testament it was prophesied that the Branch would sit on David's throne. This is not a literal "branch" that is sitting on a literal chair, that is referred to as David's throne. On the contrary, what is meant is that the Branch, Jesus, would assume the authority of reign that is symbolized by the use of the word "throne."

But we must be clear about whose throne this actually is. **David's throne in the Old Testament was actually God's throne, God's authority.** When the anointed king of Israel sat upon this throne, it was God's authority on earth that was revealed through the one who was the designated king. This is what is emphasized in **1 Chronicles 29:23**: *"Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him."* The meaning of this statement of Paul is revealed in Romans 13:1,2: *"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves."*

Paul was not talking about governments that are specifically "anointed" by God as was the case with Israel. He was discussing government in general, that government in societies is in the plan of God to maintain order in society. With Israel, however, God specifically selected and anointed the One who would sit on the throne of David in order to maintain the society of His people. This anointed king would thus represent God's rule (authority) in Israel.

God ruled Israel through His anointed kings who sat on David's throne. Therefore, the throne was actually the Lord's throne (See 1 Ch 29:23; 1 Kg 1:46-48; 2:12). Solomon sat on this throne after the death of David. David said to Solomon that he *"will come and sit on my throne, and he will be king in my place"* (1 Kg 1:35). Benaiah answered David in this context by referring to David's throne as Solomon's throne. *"As the Lord has been with my lord the king, even so may He be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David"* (1 Kg 1:37). And thus, *"Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was firmly established"* (1 Kg 2:12). But we must not forget 1 Chronicles 29:23: *"Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his*

father.” The point is that both the throne of David and Solomon were actually the throne of God. Solomon sat on David’s throne, but this throne was the manifestation of the Lord’s authority in Israel.

The throne (authority) of God is from heaven. David proclaimed, *“The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord’s throne is in heaven”* (Ps 11:4). *“Heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool”* (Is 66:1). Jesus said, *“But I say to you, do not swear at all; neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne”* (Mt 5:34; see Mt 23:22; At 7:49). The authority that was manifested on earth through the reigning kings of Israel originated from the throne of God in heaven.

When we discuss the subject of David’s throne, we are discussing the authority of God from heaven as it was manifested through the ruling kings of Israel.

We must keep in mind here that the meaning the word “throne” is metaphorical. This word would emphasize a spiritual meaning. Emphasis is not on a literal chair, **but on a spiritual realm of reign that extends from heaven.** Jesus ascended to heaven in order to reign with authority over a heavenly realm. He *“sat down on the right hand”* of God, figuratively signifying His assumption of heavenly reign as King of kings and Lord of lords (See Hb 1:3,13; 2:12; 8:1; 10:12). This is precisely what Peter proclaimed on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2 at the beginning of this dispensation of time.

Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ This Jesus God has raised up ... being exalted to the right hand of God ... (At 2:29-33).

It was to the kingdom reign of Jesus that the prophets prophesied. Consider the following key prophecies:

A. The Reign Of The Seed

David's seed would reign on David's throne. Peter's reference in Acts 2 to God's promise to David finds its origin in **2 Samuel 7:12,13,16**. God promised David,

When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.... And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever (See 1 Ch 17:10-14).

From this prophecy, there are five important promises that were made to David.

FULFILLMENT OF 2 SAMUEL 7

1. God would set up the Davidic seedline of kings.
2. God would establish the kingdom reign of David's seed.
3. David's successor would build a house for God's name.
4. God would establish the kingdom reign of David's seed.
5. David's kingdom reign would be firmly established.

God's promise and prophecy in **2 Samuel 7** were primarily directed toward Solomon's reign after David. God subsequently set up the reign of Davidic kings through Solomon. Solomon build the literal temple in Jerusalem. Because this was the work of God, it was sure and certain in the sense that God used the word "eternal" to identify the establishment of the kingdom.

The word "eternal" is not used in the sense that Solomon would reign without end. Solomon would eventually die and his personal reign would come to an end. However, His reign would come about and be established because it was God who was standing behind his reign. It was God's reign that was without end. The word "eternal" is used to refer to God's determination that Solomon's reign would be established and extend without interruption according to divine plan. The authority of his reign

was from heaven, and thus, sure and certain (See Volume 48 in the *Library* at the website: www.roger-e-dickson.org).

There was, however, a secondary significance to God's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7. **Peter's reference to this promise in Acts 2:29-36 makes it absolutely clear that God had more in mind when He made the promise to David than the earthly reign of Solomon that ended when he died.** In Acts 2 Peter makes the final application of the promise to the fulfillment of Jesus and His work. Notice the following fulfillments in Jesus of the preceding five promises that God made to David:

FULFILLMENT OF 2 SAMUEL 7 IN JESUS

1. Jesus was of the Davidic seedline (Mt 1:1-17; Lk 3:23-38).
2. Jesus sat on David's throne and established His kingdom (Lk 1:31-33).
3. Jesus built the Lord's house, His church (Mt 16:18; 1 Tm 3:15).
4. Jesus was established as King by the Father (At 2:29-36; Ep 1:20-23).
5. Jesus assumed the kingdom reign that has always existed from heaven (Mt 28:18; Cl 1:13).

Jesus fulfilled the promises of 2 Samuel 7 that God made to David. David's kingdom reign was established in Jesus in the sense that the authority for David's reign was always in or from heaven. The "throne" (authority) always originated from God, and thus, when Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven, He assumed the kingdom reign that had previously been manifested on earth through David. The difference between David's reign and Jesus' reign is that David's presence was limited only to this earth and over national Israel. However, **Jesus' presence is now in heaven and over all things.** This is what Peter wanted us to understand when He stated that David *"is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day,"* but Jesus has been *"exalted to the right hand of God"* (At 2:29,33). Therefore, we should find the fulfillment of God's promise to David in what Jesus accomplished. At the

time Peter proclaimed the fulfillment of the promise, **Jesus had already been exalted to the right hand of God.** The exaltation was past, not future.

The present kingdom reign of Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise that God made to David. Jesus fulfilled the promise when He ascended to the right hand of the Father in order to reign over all things.

B. Authority From God's Throne

The authority of the Son's reign would originate from the throne of God. Isaiah prophesied, ***"The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; so he will open, and no one will shut; and he will shut, and no one will open"*** (Is 22:22).

Herein is a prophecy of the authority that would be exercised by Jesus. In **Revelation 3:7** John revealed, ***"These things says He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens."*** There is certainly a relationship between Isaiah 22:22 and Revelation 3:7 that affirms a prophecy and its fulfillment concerning Jesus. There is a prophecy and fulfillment that speaks of the present position and authority that Jesus **has at this time** at the right hand of God.

The word "key" in Isaiah 22:22 is metaphorical of authority. Jesus now has authority over all things (See Mt 28:18; Jn 13:3; 17:2). He now **rules the nations with a rod of iron** (See Rv 3:21). He is now **far above** all principality and power (See Ep 1:20-22). In quoting Psalm 45:6,7, the Hebrew writer reaffirmed Jesus' present position and reign: ***"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom"*** (Hb 1:8).

The Hebrew writer wanted to make this point clear. He introduced **Psalm 45** by saying, ***"But to the Son He says ..."*** (Hb 1:8). Therefore, the Hebrew writer made it clear that Psalm 45:6,7 was a prophecy of the existing kingdom reign of Jesus. He quoted

Psalm 45 in reference to what Jesus was at the time the letter of Hebrews was written.

Jesus is now reigning in fulfillment of receiving the authority (keys of David) of sovereign rule over all things. Isaiah 22:22 has been fulfilled in Christ.

C. A Child Would Reign

Isaiah prophesied,

*For unto us a **Child** is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called **Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace**. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, **upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever**. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this* (Is 9:6,7).

Jesus was the child that was born and given to humanity as a sacrificial Lamb. Kingdom reign was placed on His shoulders (See Mt 28:18). He is our Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. He is the King of kings who now rules over all things, *“**angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him**”* (1 Pt 3:22). The point is that Jesus is presently reigning in the capacity of what was prophesied by Isaiah in Isaiah 9:6,7.

D. The Branch Would Reign

Jeremiah prophesied,

*Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will raise to David a **Branch of righteousness; a King will reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth**. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell safely; now this is His name by which He will be called: **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*** (Jr 23:5,6).

This prophecy clearly pictured to Israel that the coming Messiah would be a king. As king, He would prosper, though He would not prosper if He were

to reign on earth (See Jr 22:30). The prosperity of His reign would be manifested “in the earth,” not on the earth. His judgment and righteousness were that which would be in the earth. His judgment and righteousness would be manifested through the power of His word (See Jn 12:48; At 13:46).

David prophesied, “*Yet I have set My King on My holy hill of Zion*” (Ps 2:6). This, and many other prophecies, pictured Jesus to be a king (See Ps 72:1-4; Is 32:1; Jr 33:15; Ez 37:24). He would be a king who would rule as the righteousness of God. He was set on the “holy hill of Zion” in the sense that the authority of His rule was first preached in Jerusalem, and then, it was announced throughout the world through the preaching of the gospel (See Is 2:2,3; Lk 24:47).

The significance of Jesus being the righteousness of God as He sits on His throne at this time is that His reign is a significant part of the gospel. One is preaching the fullness of the gospel by preaching that Jesus is presently reigning over all things as King of kings and Lord of lords.

In quoting **Zechariah 9:9**, Matthew recorded the following concerning Jesus’ final coming to Jerusalem at the end of His earthly ministry: “*Tell the daughter of Zion, ‘Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey’*” (Mt 2:4,5). Jesus was the king who came to Jerusalem in His final days. The prophecy of Zechariah 9:9 was fulfilled in Jesus at the time Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The historical happening of the prophecy took place in the latter days of national Israel. Hosea had prophesied this: “*Afterward [that is, after the exile of the Israelites in captivity] the children of Israel will return, seek the Lord their God and David their king, and fear the Lord and His goodness in the latter days*” (Hs 3:5).

It was not that David was going to be resurrected in order that Israel seek after him. When Jesus came, David was dead and buried (See At 2:29). However,

Peter affirmed that Jesus fulfilled this prophecy and filled this position of a reigning king (See At 2:29-33). Jesus was the king that Israel was to seek. Hosea also stated that Israel would seek their king in the latter days. Peter affirmed in Acts 2:16,17 that he and all Israel were in the latter days. **It was the last days of national Israel.** It was the time in which the prophecy of Joel 2 was fulfilled and the Spirit of God was poured out. It was, therefore, in those last days in which God established Jesus as king.

Jesus is still king and all the world must now seek Him. He is now reigning over all things and exercising the sovereignty of God over things seen and not seen. The total realm of His kingship that was prophesied in the Old Testament has now been fulfilled in His present reign.

When considering the prophecies of the Old Testament, one must consider their fulfillment “in time,” not at the “end of time.” This is where most interpreters make a serious mistake concerning the fulfillment of prophecy in reference to the kingdom reign of Jesus.

Jesus knew that some people would not understand that He fulfilled all prophecy concerning Himself “in time.” At the conclusion of His earthly ministry, therefore, He made the following statement, *“These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.”* (Lk 24:44).

All prophecy concerning the position and work of Jesus at this time have been fulfilled “in time.” **No Old Testament prophecy concerning Jesus’ kingship and reign have been left unfulfilled, and thus are waiting to be fulfilled when He comes again.** This is what Jesus wanted His disciples to understand when He made the statement of Luke 24:44. This is also what He wants us today to understand concerning Old Testament prophecies in reference to His kingdom reign.

If one fails to understand the fact that all prophecies concerning Jesus' reign were fulfilled when He ascended to the right hand of the Father, then the prophecies of the Old Testament, and fulfillments concerning the reign of Jesus, will be misunderstood.

Chapter 2

• JESUS ON DAVID'S THRONE •

Throughout the New Testament one overwhelming fact is established concerning the present position and work of Jesus. **That fact is that Jesus is now reigning as King of kings and Lord of lords over all things** (See 1 Tm 6:15). Such is in fulfillment of all Old Testament prophecies that were made concerning Jesus' position and work. It is concerning these prophecies to which Jesus referred when He proclaimed their fulfillment. He made this very clear to His disciples in Luke 24:44.

In **2 Corinthians 5:16** Paul made a very significant statement concerning how we should now understand Jesus.

Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

Some may know Jesus as only the babe in a manger in Bethlehem. Some may know Him in His ministry with the disciples on the Galilean roads. Every Lord's Day, when we eat of the Lord's Supper, we are reminded of His sacrifice on the cross. **But in 2 Corinthians 5:16 Paul wants us to take our minds beyond Jesus' earthly ministry and work.** We must now know Him as He now is. And at this time He has all authority over all things and is ruling in heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords. This is how we must now know Jesus.

Those who are still waiting for Jesus to return and reign on this earth **are not recognizing Jesus as He now is.** They have relegated Him to have a

small kingdom reign in this present time, a kingdom referred to as the church. Having failed to recognize the totality of His present reign over the universe and all that is within the galaxies of creation, they have limited His reign. They do not know Jesus as He now is.

If we understand the totality of Jesus' kingdom authority, we will be driven to submission of His reign. This is certainly in the context and actions of what took place in Acts 2 when Peter announced the kingship of Jesus to the Jews who had crucified Him. *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ”* (At 2:36). The Jews knew the meaning of lordship. They knew what authority the Christ (Messiah) would have according to Old Testament prophecy. Therefore, when they came to know Jesus *“not according to the flesh,”* and as He now is in heaven as *“Lord and Christ,”* they were cut to the heart (See At 2:37). This is precisely what Paul meant when he affirmed that we do not now know Jesus according to the flesh.

If one does not preach Jesus as He now is, then he is not preaching the same gospel that Peter preached on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30.

Unless one recognizes who Jesus now is, he or she will not submit to His kingship. Those in Acts 2 who recognized the kingship of Jesus by His fulfillment of all messianic prophecies, submitted to Him as their Lord. About three thousand submitted that day when the kingship of Jesus was first announced (See At 2:41).

A. Jesus Assumed David's Throne

Gabriel said to Mary in reference to the birth of Jesus,

And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give

Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end (Lk 1:31-33).

All prophecies concerning the reign of the Son on David's throne have been fulfilled in the present reign of Jesus over all things.

Peter clearly affirmed this in **Acts 2:29-35**. At the time Peter made the statements of Acts 2, David was in the tomb (See At 2:29). However, before he died, God had sworn to him that He would raise One up to sit on his throne (See 2 Sm 7:12-25). Peter proclaimed that this prophecy was fulfilled in Christ. He stated, *“Therefore, [David] being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne”* (See At 2:30). Thus Jesus was raised up in order to sit at the right hand of God on David's throne in fulfillment of the oath that God had made to David (See Ep 1:19-23).

At the very time Peter was proclaiming the fulfillment of this prophecy in Acts 2, Jesus was on the throne. What both the prophets and Gabriel had spoken personally to Mary had been fulfilled. Jesus was and is still ruling as King. When the Jews who crucified Jesus heard this, they were cut to the heart. So should we be today. Therefore, any theology that seeks to dethrone Jesus from His present position as universal King and head over all things cannot be true. It is a false gospel message.

B. Jesus Was Born To Be A King

During the final hours of Jesus' work on earth, He was taken before Pilate, the Roman procurator of Palestine. Before Pilate, Jesus affirmed, *“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here”* (Jn 18:36).

Pilate then asked Jesus if He were a king. Jesus

responded, ***“You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice”*** (Jn 18:37).

The first thing to note from the above reply of Jesus to Pilate is the fact that Jesus said **His kingdom was not of this world**. Anyone who would affirm that Jesus will sometime in the future set up an earthly kingdom should seriously consider this statement. **Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world**. Why would we want to make His kingdom of this world? Some seek to make the kingdom of Jesus a physical kingdom of this world, and thus, dethrone Him from His present galactic reign in order to reign on this earth when He comes again. But if His kingdom were to be of this world, then it would mean that Jesus’ disciples would have to do as He said to Pilate. They would have to fight militarily to defend the kingdom (See Jn 18:36). And in the case of some religious people in the world today, they have taken up arms to fight for the defense of their faith.

In John 18:37 Jesus reaffirmed the correct deduction of Pilate’s statement that He was a king. It was for this purpose that He was incarnate in the flesh of man. Jesus came into the world to be a king, but not a king on this earth. In John 18:36 Jesus was talking about a spiritual kingdom reign that was not of this world in the sense of a king sitting on a literal throne in the capital of the kingdom. The kingdom would be ruled from heaven.

This same thought must be carried over into verse 37 of John 18. Therefore, Jesus was born in order to be the king of a kingdom that was not of this world. This was a kingdom reign that would have its “capital” in heaven at the right hand of God (See Ep 1:20-22). From this position, Jesus would reign as King of kings and Lord of lords until He comes again (See 1 Tm 6:15).

The reign of Jesus was never pictured in the Old Testament, nor in the New Testament, to be a reign from some location here on earth. Jesus' reign was always to be from heaven over all things on earth.

C. Jesus Fulfilled The Promises

Jesus fulfilled all the promises concerning reign that were made in the Old Testament. Concerning the gospel going to the Gentiles, and the Messiah's reign over the nations, Paul stated, *"Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers"* (Rm 15:8).

Jesus fulfilled the promises that were made to the fathers (See Lk 24:44). The promises included a reign that would extend beyond the Jewish fathers. By referring to Isaiah 11:1,10, Paul quoted, *"There will be a root of Jesse; and He who will rise to reign over the Gentiles, in Him the Gentiles will hope"* (Rm 15:12). Paul's application of Isaiah 11 was to Jesus' present reign over the Gentiles. He was not discussing something that would take place in the future. The fulfillment of the promises has been accomplished. In Christ were the promises fulfilled. Paul also wrote, *"For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen"* (2 Co 1:20).

The New Testament affirms that the promises of God that were made concerning the reign of Jesus over the Gentiles have been fulfilled. Jesus is the "Yes" and "Amen" concerning all Old Testament prophecies that referred to the kingdom reign of the Messiah. He fulfilled all prophecies concerning His kingdom reign over all things on David's throne.

D. Jesus Received The Blessing

Jesus received the holy and sure blessing of David. When God took David from being a shepherd in order to make him king of Israel, He established a covenant with him. In 2 Samuel 7 God reviewed this matter with David. God said, *"I took you from the sheep fold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over*

My people, over Israel” (2 Sm 7:8). The covenant God made with David included the promise to set up his seed after him to be kings over Israel. *“I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever”* (2 Sm 7:12,13). Of this covenant and promise, David revealed in the Psalms, *“My mercy I will keep for him forever, and My covenant will stand firm with him”* (Ps 89:28).

This promise that one would reign after David, and upon his throne, is the foundation for the prophecy of Isaiah 55:3: *“Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul will live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you—the sure mercies of David.”* The significance of this prophecy was not clearly understood until the coming of the Christ, for it was in the Christ that the promise was to be fulfilled.

Paul applied the promise of Isaiah 55:3 concerning the “sure mercies of David” to Jesus. In Acts 13:33,34 Paul quoted Isaiah 55:3:

God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.’ And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, He has spoken thus: “I will give you the sure mercies of David.”

The “sure mercies of David” refer to the original promise of God to David, that He would set One on his throne who would reign (See 2 Sm 7:8,12,13). **Paul affirmed that this promise was eventually fulfilled in Christ.** At the time Paul made the statement, and quotation in Acts 13, **Jesus was reigning in heaven.** The certainty that Jesus’ reign would continue was guaranteed by His resurrection from the dead. Jesus would continue to reign because He had conquered death. His present immortality assured His continuing reign.

From the above points there is only one conclusion that can be made. **Jesus is now reigning. He is reigning as King and Priest on David’s throne.** His kingdom is not of this world. It is not and never will

be a physical kingdom of this world. All prophecies concerning both the King and the kingdom have been fulfilled in Christ (See Lk 24:44).

Chapter 3

• THE EXISTING REIGN OF THE KING •

The Old Testament prophets prepared the way for the coming reign of Jesus over all things. Throughout their history as a nation, it was established within the minds of the Jews the teaching that the Father was king and head over all things (See 1 Ch 29:11,12). However, the time would come when this kingship and headship would come to reality in the Messiah.

As one studies through key New Testament statements concerning the present kingdom reign of Jesus, we must keep in mind the fact that Jesus assumed the universal reign of the Father over all things when He ascended to the Father.

Before Jesus' ascension to the right hand of the Father, the Father was king and head over all things, including the nation of Israel. After the ascension, however, Jesus was made head and king over all things, including the church of submitted subjects. When Jesus comes again, this sovereign reign over all things will be returned to the Father.

Those who advocate the teaching of an earthly reign of Jesus miss the point of the present universal reign of Jesus. In missing this point, they fail to see the present reign of Jesus over all things and the return of this kingdom reign to the Father at the end of time. They affirm that Jesus is not now reigning over a universal kingdom. It is affirmed by some that the prophecies of the universal reign of Jesus that were made in the Old Testament have not been fulfilled. And since they have not been fulfilled, these prophecies must and will be fulfilled when Jesus comes again. The prophesied universal reign of Jesus will be fulfilled in the supposed physical earthly reign of Jesus.

Most people understand that Jesus is presently

reigning. It is affirmed that Jesus is presently reigning over what is referred to as the “kingdom of God.” But this kingdom is limited to the church. However, it is affirmed that there is another kingdom that is coming. This coming kingdom will be an earthly kingdom over which Jesus will reign on this earth for a period of one thousand years. Throughout this reign, all rebellious subjects will be forcefully subjugated to His earthly rule.

This teaching is promoted partly because of a misunderstanding of certain phrases in the New Testament that are used in reference to the present kingdom reign of Jesus. One must first understand that there is only one universal kingdom that is mentioned in the Bible in reference to the sovereignty of God over all things. During the time of the Old Testament, the Father was king and head over this universal kingdom (See 1 Ch 29:11,12). But after His ascension, Jesus assumed this kingship and headship over the universal kingdom (See Ep 1:20-23).

Jesus spoke of His reign during His ministry. When Matthew and Mark recorded the teachings of Jesus, they used different phrases in reference to Jesus’ teachings concerning His kingdom reign. Matthew used the phrase “kingdom of heaven,” for he was writing to the Jews (See Mt 5:3,19; 8:11; 13:11,19, 24,31,33,34). Mark used the phrase “kingdom of God,” for he was writing to disciples in general (See Mk 1:14,15; 14:25; 15:43). Because Luke was writing to a Gentile, he also used the phrase “kingdom of God” (See Lk 13:18,28,29; 17:20,21).

The use of these phrases does not signify different kingdoms. They refer to the same kingdom reign, the kingdom reign that originates from God, and thus, originates from heaven. This is the kingdom of which Jesus spoke to Pilate, *“My kingdom is not of this world”* (Jn 18:36). This is the kingdom about which Paul later wrote, *“He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love”* (Cl 1:13).

The kingdom of God and Christ are the same kingdom. Jesus has assumed the reign of this universal kingdom that existed before His ascension to the right hand of the Father. The Father has now given to Him all authority of kingdom reign. Jesus presently exercises this sovereignty at the right hand of the Father (See Jn 13:3; 17:2; Mt 28:18).

When Jesus came in the flesh, He came in the fullness of time (See Gl 4:4) in order to fulfill all prophecy concerning His prophesied reign. *“Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand’”* (Mk 1:14,15). During his ministry, John the Baptist likewise affirmed that the kingdom of God was near unto being established (See Mt 3:2). This message was preached by both Jesus and His immediate disciples throughout the earthly ministry of Jesus (See Mt 10:7; Lk 10:9,10).

During both the ministry of Jesus and John, the way was being prepared for Jesus to ascend to the right hand of the Father in order to assume kingdom reign over all things. Therefore, during His ministry, Jesus said to the disciples, *“Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God present with power”* (Mk 9:1).

Jesus came to fulfill prophecy. He stated that prophecy would be fulfilled. And, He fulfilled all kingdom reign prophecies when He ascended to the Father.

Jesus is presently reigning over all things. **He is reigning in the total capacity of kingship that was prophesied in the Old Testament.** He has assumed sovereignty over all things and will reign until He comes again. The following points are a brief review of key statements in the New Testament that affirm the present universal reign of Jesus. These statements clearly teach that Jesus is presently reigning in the full capacity that was prophesied in the Old Testament.

A. Jesus Prophesied His Reign

Throughout His ministry, Jesus was not unaware of His destiny in relation to kingdom reign. He knew that the Father had given all things into His hands (See Jn 13:3; 17:2). Therefore, throughout His ministry He prepared the hearts of His disciples to accept Him as their new King and His kingdom reign. It was to this reign as the Messiah, therefore, that He directed the attention of His disciples concerning their hopes for the future.

1. Jesus Was Aware Of His Kingship

Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus knew that He was headed to the right hand of the Father in heaven. In the context of **John 13**, John recorded the following statement concerning Jesus' awareness of His destiny: *“Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper”* (Jn 13:3,4). Later, Jesus prayed, *“Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh”* (Jn 17:1,2). Therefore, throughout His ministry Jesus knew that He had been given all authority by the Father, and thus He would exercise such when He ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven.

In knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, Jesus stated to the disciples at the conclusion of His earthly ministry, *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth”* (Mt 28:18). *“All authority in heaven and earth”* does not sound like Jesus' kingdom reign was to be limited to a small group of disciples, called the church. On the contrary, the kingdom reign of Jesus would extend far beyond the church and beyond this world, for He had all authority **in heaven** and earth. This is precisely what Paul stated in **Ephesians 1:22**: *“And He [the Father] put all things under His [Jesus'] feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the*

church [or, for the sake of the church].” Jesus has now been exalted *“above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth”* (Ph 2:9,10).

2. Jesus Prophesied His Ascension

Jesus prophesied,

“For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the Son of Man in His kingdom” (Mt 16:27,28; see Mk 9:1).

This statement finds its background in the prophecy of **Daniel 7:13,14** where Daniel envisioned the Son of Man ascending to the Ancient of Days (the Father) where He would receive dominion, glory and sovereignty. In the context of His ministry, Jesus made the above statement to the disciples in order to prepared them for what was coming. He did so in order to bring His immediate audience to His imminent kingdom reign that would occur within their lifetime.

All this was **at hand**. The kingdom was near unto being established. The fulfillment of this prophecy, as well as all Old Testament prophecies concerning the reign of Jesus, were soon to take place and did at the ascension (See At 1 & 2). We must, therefore, realize the significance of the events in Acts 1 & 2 as the historical fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the kingdom reign of Jesus.

B. Jesus Ascended To The Father

Luke recorded the historical event of Jesus' ascension in **Acts 1:9**: *“Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”* Herein is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Daniel 7:13,14. Jesus ascended unto the Ancient of Days (the Father). There was given to him *“dominion*

and glory and sovereignty” (Dn 7:14). **When Jesus comes again, He will already have received and exercised His kingdom reign** (Lk 19:11-27).

1. Jesus Now Exercises Sovereignty

In Daniel 7:13,14, Daniel pictured the Son of Man (Jesus) **coming to the Ancient of Days**. He was not coming to this earth. Since God dwells in heaven (See 1 Kg 8:27; At 17:24,27,28), then Jesus ascended to the Father **in heaven**. Those who believe that Jesus is coming to this earth to receive a kingdom affirm that He will descend to this earth to receive the “dominion, glory and sovereignty” that is pictured in Daniel 7:13,14.

The prophecy and fulfillment of Daniel 7 was explained by Peter in Acts 2:29-36 where Peter affirmed, *“This Jesus God raised up”* and exalted Him to the right hand of God. Jesus ascended to the Father in heaven. When this occurred, there was given to Him dominion, glory and kingdom reign. Since Daniel 7 has been fulfilled, then there can be no other fulfillment yet in the future.

2. Jesus Already Received Sovereignty

Jesus will come having already received kingdom reign. In Jesus’ parable of **Luke 19:11-27**, He explained, *“A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return”* (Lk 19:12). In this parable, Jesus pictured Himself as the nobleman. As stated in Daniel 7:13,14, and affirmed by Luke in Acts 1:9, Jesus did “go away” to receive sovereignty over all things. He went away to heaven. In the parable, Jesus also pictured Himself as coming again. *“And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him”* (Lk 19:15). Therefore, when the nobleman (Jesus) returned, **he had already received the kingdom**. He was not coming in order to receive sovereignty, for He had already received such.

There is nothing difficult about understanding the preceding thoughts. Daniel prophesied that Jesus would receive dominion, glory and sovereign reign when He ascended to the Father in heaven (See Dn 7:13,14). Peter stated that He did ascend (See At 2:29-36). When Jesus ascended, He was seated at the right hand of the Father to reign as king of His kingdom (See Ep 1:20-22).

When Jesus comes again, He will have already received His kingdom. He is now reigning with all dominion and sovereignty that was given to Him by the Father when He ascended to the right hand of the Father.

C. The Present Reign Of Jesus

From the preceding two points, one thing is firmly established by Scripture. **Jesus is now reigning as king and His reign is over all things.** The point is that if He is now reigning over all things, **then there is no future kingdom reign that would excel His present reign.** In fact, if He were to descend to the earth in order to establish an earthly reign He would actually be giving up the totality of His present reign.

1. Jesus Is Now Reigning

When Peter made the first official announcement of the sovereignty of Jesus on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30, he stated, *“For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: **The Lord said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’**”* (At 2:34,35). This is a quotation from **Psalm 110:1**. Peter’s point was clear. David did not ascend into the heavens, **but Jesus did.** And Jesus was given universal authority over all things at the right hand of the Father, which authority David never received as a king.

The metaphor “right hand” refers to the place of authority. When one was at the right hand of a king, that person had the authority of the king. So it is with Jesus. He is at the right hand of the Father, and

thus, has the authority of the Father over all things.

Peter was affirming that the prophecy that was made by David in Psalm 110:1 was fulfilled in Christ. It was fulfilled when Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father. Peter concluded, *“Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear”* (At 2:33; see Rm 8:34; Cl 3:1). Thus God raised Jesus from the dead and . . .

. . . seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church (Ep 1:20-22).

2. Jesus Now Reigns Over All Things

Paul wrote **Ephesians 1:19-23** after Jesus had ascended to the right hand of the Father in order to exercise all authority over heaven and earth. After Acts 1, Jesus was seated at the right hand of the Father in the heavenly places *“far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named”* (Ep 1:21). Just in case this is not simple enough, or might be misunderstood, Paul clearly stated the all-encompassing present kingdom authority of Jesus in Ephesians 1:22: *“And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church.”*

Two things are discussed in Ephesians 1:19-23: **(1)** The first is the kingdom reign of Jesus. It is a reign **far above** any earthly reign of authorities on this earth. **(2)** The purpose of this reign is for the sake of the second point Paul mentions, that is, the church. Jesus reigns over all authorities “to the church,” that is, **for the benefit of the church.**

The church and kingdom reign are not the same in Ephesians 1. One is for the benefit of the other. Kingdom reign over all things is for the benefit of the church.

A parallel text to Ephesians 1:19-23 is **Philippians 2:9-11**:

*Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee **should bow**, of those in heaven, and those on earth, and those under the earth, and that every tongue **should confess** that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

This statement affirms the present position of Jesus. Paul said that God “has highly exalted” Jesus. This is **past tense**. At the time Paul wrote the letter of Philippians, **Jesus had already been highly exalted**. There is no period of at least 2,000 years between the cross of verse 8 and the exaltation pictured in verses 9-11. After the cross, Jesus received the crown. He was raised up and seated at the right hand of the Father (See Ep 1:19,20).

As Daniel also stated, every knee **should bow** and every tongue **should confess** to Jesus’ present reign (See Dn 7:13,14). However, **there are always disobedient subjects in every kingdom**. Both in Daniel 7:13,14 and Philippians 2, the word “should” is **subjunctive**. It is not “would.” Thus in the prophecy (See Dn 7:13,14), as well as in Paul’s affirmation of fulfillment (See Ep 1:19-23; Ph 2:9-11), Jesus was seated on the throne, **but not all of the realm of His worldwide kingdom subjects would bow to Him as the King**. They should, but they do not bow and confess their King. Nevertheless, though they are disobedient insurrectionist subjects in the kingdom, they are still under the kingdom reign of Jesus.

Jesus is now reigning in the heavenly places. He has **all** authority. **All** things have been placed under His feet. He is head over **all** things. How much more kingdom authority could Jesus possibly receive in the future over some earthly reign than what He now has? It is evident that those who profess a future earthly reign of Jesus are saying that Jesus will have to give up His present universal authority when He comes again in order to reign on this earth.

D. Jesus Reigns Over All Powers

Paul wrote that Jesus is *“the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords”* (1 Tm 6:15). Paul was stating in this passage that Jesus is now a king and lord. Kingship and lordship are not something yet in the future in reference to Jesus. On the contrary, of all the present kings of the earth, Jesus is now their King. Of all the lords of the earth, Jesus is now their Lord. John also revealed that Jesus is presently *“Lord of lords and King of kings”* (Rv 17:14; 19:16).

All kings and lords of the earth are not in the church. Nevertheless, Jesus is still their King and Lord. Therefore, Jesus’ authority as King and Lord goes far beyond the membership of the church.

We must not misunderstand this point. Some contend that Jesus is now King and Lord only over the church. But both Paul and John would disagree with this conclusion. The kingship and lordship of Jesus extends to all lords and kings of the entire world. Though all kings and lords of the world are not obedient subjects to Jesus’ kingdom reign, **this does not mean that they are outside the authority of His kingdom reign.**

All the world is under the kingdom reign of Jesus, but not all the world is the church. Jesus is King and Lord of all the kings and lords of the world, but not all the kings and lords of the world are in the church.

The church is the called out group of people of the world who have submitted to the kingdom reign of Jesus. But we must keep in mind that this submissive group, the church, **does not limit the kingdom reign of Jesus over all things.** It does not because Jesus’ authority extends far beyond His disciples.

Those who affirm that the kingdom of Jesus and His church are the same thing make a fatal mistake here. By affirming that the kingdom and church of Jesus are the same realm, **one limits the present**

kingdom reign of Jesus. All the world is not in the church, but Jesus' kingdom reign is over all things. If the kingdom and the church are the exact same thing, and Jesus' kingdom reign is limited to the church, then Jesus is not King of kings and Lord of lords. All kings and lords of the world are under the kingship of Jesus, but they are not members of the church. Therefore, the kingdom reign of Jesus extends beyond Christians. The boundaries of the kingdom of Jesus extend far beyond the hearts of the obedient.

E. Jesus Reigns Over The Unseen

Peter revealed that Jesus *“has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him”* (1 Pt 3:22). This statement certainly affirms that Jesus' present reign extends far beyond His disciples. Heavenly angels are under the kingdom reign of Jesus, but they are not members of the church. Earthly authorities and powers are under the kingdom reign of Jesus, but they, too, are not in the body of Christ. What is thus pictured here by Peter in one statement is the fact that Jesus' reign is presently universal. All things have been put under His present sovereignty (See Ep 1:20-22). All things that have been created are under His control.

So we ask, When Jesus comes again to establish His supposed earthly reign, will He give up His present reign over angels? If He does, then His earthly kingdom reign will be inferior to His present reign.

All prophecy and fulfillment emphasize a present universal and total reign of Jesus. But if Jesus returns to reign on this earth, then He will have to forsake much of His present kingdom authority.

F. Saints Now Reign With Jesus

Some have affirmed that Paul's statement in **2 Timothy 2:11,12**, and John's statement in **Revelation 2:26-28**, refer to a future reign of Jesus.

However, the contexts of these two passages do not allow this interpretation.

1. Christians Presently Live & Reign

In 2 Timothy 2:11,12 Paul wrote, *“This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we will also live with Him. If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.”* Some teach that if we endure with Jesus during this life, we will in His earthly kingdom in the future, reign with Him on this earth. It is affirmed, therefore, that the reign of Jesus will be in the future.

But notice the **conditions** and **consequences** that Paul stated in 2 Timothy 2:11,12. He stated that *“if we died with Him”* (condition), we will also *“live with Him”* (consequence). The fact is that Christians have died with Christ in obedience to the gospel (See Rm 6:3-6; Cl 3:3). The New Testament also teaches that we now live with Jesus, for we walk in newness of life (See Rm 6:4,5). This new life is as what Paul explained to the Galatians. *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me”* (Gl 2:20). So Christians have died with Christ **in this life**. But they are also now living with Christ in this life.

Because Christians have eaten of the Bread of Life, they have life in Christ (See Jn 6:51-58). Jesus made this promise to His disciples during His earthly ministry: *“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly”* (Jn 10:10). Those who have died with Christ, now have life with Christ. They are now reigning in life with Christ with whom they have died. **Since the condition is now true of every Christian, the consequence is also true.**

Paul continued to say that *“if we endure”* (condition), we will also *“reign with him”* (consequence). Christians are presently enduring with Christ in the sufferings that come with being a disciple of Jesus

(See At 14:22; 1 Th 2:14; 2 Th 1:4; 2 Tm 4:5).

The condition of Paul's statement is now true. The consequence is also now true. **Christians are now reigning with Christ because they are now enduring with Him.** This is exactly what Paul said in Romans 5:17: *“For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.”*

Christians are now reigning in life with Christ. The enduring (suffering) through which one must go with Christ takes place in this life. The reigning with Christ is also in this life.

2. Jesus Already Received Authority

Now consider John's statement in **Revelation 2:26,27** in relation to what Paul just revealed in 2 Timothy 2:11,12. John recorded the promise of Jesus that *“he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—‘He will rule them with a rod of iron; as the potter's vessels will be broken to pieces’—as I have received from My Father.”*

Some have affirmed a materialistic interpretation of passages as this. It is affirmed that in some way the Christian will receive power over his fellow persecutors in some future earthly kingdom of Jesus. Such desires are certainly earthly and carnal. To become a Christian on the basis of having a promise that we will gain some type of earthly power over others is certainly a worldly motivation for becoming a Christian. It is also against the servanthood nature that must be characteristic of the life of every Christian (See Mk 10:35-45). We do not think this is what Jesus meant in Revelation 2:26,27.

What Jesus did state was that He had already received ruling power from the Father by the time He made this statement through John in Revelation 2:26,27. The tense of the verb is **past tense**. Jesus had already received power over the nations by the

time John wrote, which power continues unto this day.

In Revelation 3:21 Jesus said, *“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”* The tense that is used here in reference to Jesus’ reign is also **past tense**. In other words, by the time this statement was made and recorded, Jesus had already overcome and sat down at the right hand of the Father. Jesus was already reigning when this statement was made.

In the context of both Revelation 2:26,27 and 3:21, Jesus was giving encouragement to those who were suffering persecution from the Roman government. If one was faithful “until the end,” that is, death, he or she would have overcome. The Christian’s power is in remaining faithful under persecution. Christians reign over their enemies when they maintain their faith until the end of their lives. In this context, Jesus promised,

Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life (Rv 2:10).

In life, Christians reign in that persecutors have no power over their destiny. Their bodies can be killed, but they simply go in the spirit to be in the presence of their King (See 2 Co 5:8; Ph 1:23). They continue their reign with Jesus since they have overcome. They have received their crown of life by being victorious over those who sought in life to submit them to earthly tyranny.

G. Jesus’ Reign Will End

Paul’s statements in **1 Corinthians 15:24-28** are a brief and simple affirmation of facts concerning end-of-time events in relation to the present kingdom reign of Jesus. Paul wrote in reference to the future, *“Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to*

God the Father” (1 Co 15:24). Keep in mind that the word “kingdom” is metaphorically used here, and in other contexts, to refer to the sovereignty of God over all things. Jesus presently has this sovereignty to reign that was given to Him by the Father (See Mt 28:18). However, in the end when He comes again Paul revealed that **He will return this sovereignty of kingdom reign to the Father**. The point is that Jesus is now reigning, but when He comes again He will return kingdom reign to the Father; **His reigning will cease when the last enemy is destroyed**.

We also must keep in mind that in the context of 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 Paul was talking about kingdom reign and **not church**. He was discussing the position and work of Jesus as King of kings, not the members of the body. When he mentioned the return of “kingdom” to the Father, his reference in the context was to sovereign reign, not His church of people. This is clearly seen in the next statement of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:25.

Paul continued, **“For He must reign until He has put all enemies under His feet”** (1 Co 15:25). Paul identified the last enemy as physical death (1 Co 15:26). In the context of 1 Corinthians 15, therefore, **Paul was discussing physical death and the final resurrection**.

Physical death will pass away in the end, at the final coming of Jesus (1 Co 15:50-56). Thus the “end” in the context of verses 24-28 is the final coming of Jesus when He comes to resurrect all the dead (See Jn 5:28,29). It will be at that time that Jesus will have submitted all things to Himself, including physical death. Jesus must reign until this last enemy is overcome. When the last enemy is overcome through the final resurrection, then His reign will cease. This is what verse 24 is stating.

Paul concluded, **“Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all”** (1 Co 15:28).

Jesus is now reigning over all things and will so reign until the end. The end will be at His final coming. When physical death is destroyed by the resurrection of all the dead, then He will return kingdom reign to the Father that God may be all in all.

Though the world refuses to recognize Jesus' authority over all things, this does not mean that He does not now reign over all. Every earthly kingdom has insubordinate subjects. So it is with the kingdom of Jesus. Insubordinate subjects are those who refuse to submit to His sovereignty. However, there are those who do submit. The submitted are His disciples, the church. The church of the kingdom reign of Jesus are the obedient subjects of Jesus' reign. The members of the church allow Jesus to reign in their hearts (See Lk 17:20,21). It is for these that Jesus is coming to receive them to Himself (See 1 Th 4:13-18).

Chapter 4

• THE REALITY OF KING JESUS' REIGN •

There is a great difference between the spiritual and physical millennialists views of things present and future. Those who teach that Jesus is coming to reign on this literal earth teach that during the supposed future millennial reign of Jesus He will set up an earthly reign on this earth. As previously stated, this view maintains the belief that Jesus will descend from heaven in order to assume rule on David's throne in Jerusalem of Palestine in order to reign over an earthly kingdom. We must focus a great deal on this teaching simply because a vast majority of the religious world today presently maintains this false hope in reference to the future.

It is believed that Jesus originally came to establish an earthly kingdom reign. However, the Jews rejected Him as their king. As a consequence of their rejection, Jesus supposedly **postponed** His earthly kingdom until He comes again. When He

comes again, **He will forcefully set up a physical kingdom and forcefully subject the entire world to His rule.** The saints will then rule with Him on earth throughout this physical kingdom reign.

From a materialistic point of view, the above sounds appealing. From the point of view of our desire to rule over one another, it sounds even better. What could appeal more to the carnal nature of humanity than the idea that we will eventually inherit all the treasures of the world, while at the same time, have a part in literally being assigned to be kings over a certain segment of Jesus' earthly reign. But is this really the aspiration of a disciple of Jesus?

So will Jesus ever set foot on this physical world again? This is the question that must be answered. And it must be answered from a biblical perspective in relation to the spiritual nature of God's work among people today throughout the world. In this context of thought, the following points must be considered when discussing the reign of Jesus in relation to this world:

A. Lack Of Biblical Support

The earthly kingship of Jesus has absolutely no support in the Bible. This is the primary problem with the belief that Jesus will reign on this earth. We can find no biblical statement that teaches this. **There is no scripture in the entire Bible that says Jesus will ever set foot on this earth again,** must less, reign on it.

If the earthly reign of Jesus were true, then we would assume that there would be numerous texts throughout the New Testament that would mention this. But these statements are just not there. They are not found in Old Testament prophecy. They are not found in the New Testament fulfillment of those prophecies. If such a kingdom reign on earth were true, then certainly we would not be wrong to assume that the New Testament would contain numerous prophecies of such in order to give hope to every Christian.

Old Testament prophecy does speak of the coming Messiah who would be born of woman (See Is 7:14). The Messiah would dwell among people (See Is 53). He would reign on David's throne (See 2 Sm 7:12,13,16). However, these and related prophecies in the Old Testament were speaking of Jesus' **first coming**, which coming resulted in the establishment of a kingdom that was not of the nature of earthly kingdoms (See Jn 18:38; Lk 17:20,21). To twist the prophecies that refer to the first coming of Jesus in order to make them fit a future millennial reign of Jesus on earth, is to take these prophecies out of their historical context, and thus, deny their fulfillment in Jesus.

There are no Old Testament prophecies, or New Testament fulfillments, that speak of Jesus ever setting foot on this earth again.

The obvious lack of supportive evidence in both the Old and New Testaments to an earthly reign of Jesus is the most powerful argument against the futile hope of an earthly reign of Jesus. If a teaching is to be considered a biblical teaching, then certainly it must have clear biblical support. But if it has no biblical support, then certainly it cannot be maintained as a Bible teaching. This is especially true concerning the major teachings of a supposed earthly reign of Jesus.

B. Jesus Cannot Reign On Earth

After the death of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, Jehoiachin, his son, reigned in his place as king of Judah in 597 B.C. (See 2 Kg 24:5,6; Jr 22:24-30). Jehoiachin had reigned only three months when Nebuchadnezzar brought his army to Judah and overthrew Jerusalem (See 2 Kg 24:8-10). Subsequently, **Jehoiachin and his family were taken into Babylonian captivity**. In this historical context, Jeremiah made a most significant prophecy in **Jeremiah 22:30**. He wrote,

Thus says the Lord: 'Write this man down as childless, a man who will not prosper in his days; for none of his descendants will prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah.'

There has been much controversy over this profound prophecy of Jeremiah, specifically in reference to the kingdom reign of Jesus. **If what Jeremiah was stating is taken literally, then certainly no descendants of David through Jehoiachin, that would include Jesus, could ever prosper and reign on earth in Judah.** Since Jerusalem is in Judah, then what Jeremiah stated is that Jesus, as David's descendant, **could never reign again in the city of Jerusalem.**

What Jeremiah was prophesying was that Israel as an independent nation was over forever. **Babylon's conquest of national Israel terminated the Jews' right to exist as a God-ordained independent nation with its own land.** The Medo-Persian Empire conquered the Babylonians, and thus seized control of the land of Palestine (See Dn 2 & 7). After the Medo-Persians came the Greeks, and then the Romans. **All these empires seized control of the land Palestine.**

After the Romans came other world powers who controlled Palestine. But Jeremiah wanted to make it clear in His prophecy that God never intended after the conquest of the remaining remnant of Israel in Judah, **that there would ever again be a God-sanctioned independent nation of Israel in Palestine.**

(Do not make the mistake of thinking that the present modern-day Israel that is in Palestine is the Israel of God that was in Palestine before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. The present nation is simply a nation that was established by colonial powers after World War I. At the time, England had possession of the land. After World War II, and in 1948, the Jews declared their own nation, not God. After World War I, land

was requisitioned from the local residents and given to the Jews. When the Jews declared their own statehood in 1948, they simply took land from the local Palestinians and wrote land deeds for themselves. God had nothing to do with all this, for if He had, then He would have contradicted Himself in speaking the prophecy of Jeremiah 22:30 through His prophet Jeremiah.)

Now consider some thoughts in reference to the prophecy of Jeremiah. Jehoiachin (or, Jeconiah – Jr 24:1; 1 Ch 3:16; Coniah – Jr 22:24,28; 37:1) was of the seed of David. It was through Jehoiachin that Jesus was born (See Mt 1:12). Jehoiachin, however, was not childless, for there is mention of His children in 1 Chronicles 3:17 and Matthew 1:12. However, **not one of these sons reigned as king of Judah.** In this sense, therefore, Jeremiah's prophecy was correct, for he had said, ***“For none of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah.”*** Jehoiachin was thus childless as far as having a successor to the throne.

Jehoiachin was childless in reference to Jesus ruling on a literal throne in Judah over a national independent state of Israel.

In the inspired recorded genealogy of Matthew 1:12, Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) is listed as the anointed heir of David's lineage through whom Jesus came. The point is that God would not have accepted any other son of Josiah (Jehoiachin's grandfather) through whom to maintain the Davidic kings of Judah. Shealtiel is listed in Matthew 1 as the son of Jehoiachin, but he did not reign as a king. The Matthew 1 genealogy is the Holy Spirit given genealogy of David's heirs through whom the Messiah would come. **After Jehoiachin, no descendant of Jehoiachin would or did reign as a God-anointed king in Jerusalem.**

After Jehoiachin was taken into Babylonian

captivity, Zedekiah, the son of Josiah who was of the lineage of David, assumed the throne in Jerusalem (See 1 Ch 3:15). However, his appointment as king was made by Nebuchadnezzar. **It was not sanctioned by God.** Therefore, God revealed concerning Zedekiah,

Remove the turban [diadem], and take off the crown Overthrown, I will make it overthrown! It will be no longer, until He comes whose right it is, and I will give it to Him (Ez 21:26,27).

Zedekiah did not have a right to the throne. **God had terminated the Davidic kings on earth with the reign of Jehoiachin.** Therefore, Zedekiah was commanded to take off the crown and remove himself from the throne. There would be none of Jehoiachin's descendants, including Zedekiah, who would ever again reign and prosper on an earthly throne of David in Jerusalem. The One who would prosper would not reign in Jerusalem on a literal throne, but in heaven where the authority of David's throne had always existed. This is where Jesus presently is, and from heaven He reigns over all things.

Jeremiah again prophesied of this One who would come. *“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, that I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; a King will reign and prosper and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth”* (Jr 23:5). This One who would come would be Jesus. However, His reign would not be on this earth, **but in heaven at the right hand of the Father.** If His reign were on earth, then it would be earthly.

The fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy of 22:30 is in the fact that such historically happened. After Jehoiachin, no rightful heir of the Davidic lineage ever reigned again in Jerusalem as a God-anointed king. Kings reigned, but they were not anointed by God. The only anointed One that would reign on David's throne would be the Messiah, the Christ. His reign, however, **would not be on earth, but in**

heaven where He is now seated at the right hand of God. Jesus is now the anointed one of God who has ascended to the right hand of God in order to reign over all things. He is there now, reigning as King of kings.

C. Jesus Cannot Be A King On Earth

It was prophesied that Jesus would be both a priest and king on His throne. He is now such in heaven. However, if He were to come to this earth, **He would have to give up His priesthood.** The Bible teaches that Jesus cannot be a priest on this earth. Both prophecy and fulfillment affirm this truth.

1. Prophecy Of Priesthood & Kingship

Zechariah made a very significant prophecy in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah. In this prophecy, he stated that the Messiah would be a priest upon His throne. He prophesied,

Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He will branch out, and He will build the temple of the Lord; Yes, He will build the temple of the Lord. He will bear the glory and will sit and rule on His throne; so He will be a priest on His throne, and the counsel of peace will be between them both (Zc 6:12,13).

This prophecy is of Jesus, the Branch, who would fulfill it in every detail.

2. Fulfillment Of Priesthood & Kingship

In **Hebrews 4:14**, the Hebrew writer stated, *“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.”* Jesus is our *“priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”* (Hb 5:6; see 7:17,21-28). The New Testament clearly states that **Jesus is now a priest.** Therefore, **the prophecy of Zechariah has been fulfilled.**

In Hebrews 4:14 above, the verb “has passed” is a **perfect participle** in the Greek text. It thus expresses **action that was completed in the past but with**

emphasis on the continued result in the present of that past action. Therefore, Jesus became our High Priest when He ascended to the right hand of the Father in heaven. This event took place over two thousand years ago. Hebrews 8:1 declares, ***“We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.”*** Jesus is still at the right hand of the Father. He is still there today functioning as our High Priest. Jesus continues with this ***“unchangeable priesthood”*** unto this day (See Hb 7:3,23,24).

Zechariah’s prophecy was fulfilled in Christ. When Jesus ascended to the Father, He became our High Priest on His heavenly throne. He thus reigns as King and functions as a High Priest on David’s throne in heaven. If He were to come and reign on this earth, **then He would have to forfeit His high priesthood.**

3. Impossibility Of Priesthood On Earth

In the context of the present priesthood of Jesus on His throne in heaven, **Hebrews 8:4** is a very significant statement: ***“For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law.”*** The point here is obvious. Jesus cannot be a priest on this earth. If He were to return to reign on the earth, He would have to give up His high priesthood.

We must not miss this very important teaching in the Bible. Zechariah prophesied that Jesus would be a priest on His throne (See Zc 6:13). The Hebrew writer stated that Jesus cannot be a priest on this earth. The conclusion is without question.

Jesus cannot be our High Priest, and at the same time, rule on His throne on this earth.

Consider the above teaching of Hebrews 8:4 and Zechariah 6:12,13 from another perspective. Zechariah prophesied that the Branch (Jesus) would be a priest on His throne. The Hebrew writer stated

that Jesus is now our High Priest, and this priesthood is from heaven (See Hb 4:14; 8:1). Therefore, **the throne upon which Jesus is our High Priest is in heaven.** The ruling of Jesus upon His throne, as was prophesied by Zechariah, is now taking place, **but it is taking place in heaven.** It was never meant to take place on this earth. Thus in the future Jesus is not coming in order to become our High Priest on this earth. He is coming to take home those for whom He has always function as their High Priest.

The prophecy and fulfillment of Jesus' priesthood from heaven, and not on earth, corresponds perfectly with the nature of the prophecy of Jeremiah 22:30. Jesus, as the descendant of Jehoiachin, would not and cannot prosper on a literal throne in Judah. He can only prosper as our King and Priest from His throne in heaven. Those who contend that Jesus will return to this earth in order to assume a supposed earthly kingdom reign, are actually saying that Jesus will give up His high priesthood, for He cannot be a priest on this earth. They are saying that Jesus will actually be lowered from His present position as King and Priest in order to come and rule over a literal earthly kingdom. This very thought, however, is against the nature of the present reign of Jesus, that is within the hearts of people. The reign of Christ has always been spiritual on earth in the hearts of people. It is for this reason that we exalt His reign in our hearts.

D. Jesus Reigns From Heaven

Jesus now has all authority and is presently reigning from heaven (See Mt 28:18; Hb 8:1). He *“ascended on high. He led captivity captive”* (Ep 4:8). He now rules the nations (See Rv 3:21). If a future reign of Jesus on earth is taught in the Bible—and is as important as some claim—then we would wonder why the Bible places so much emphasis on the present heavenly reign of Jesus in heaven? If the supposed millennial reign of Jesus on earth is to be as great as some contend, then why does not the

Bible clearly and openly teach such?

The fact is that the Bible does not teach a future physical reign of Jesus on this earth. The prophets prophesied the present kingdom reign of Jesus (See Dn 7:13,14). Their prophecies have been fulfilled. Therefore, Jesus is presently reigning *“far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named”* (Ep 1:21). God has *“highly exalted Him and given Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow”* (Ph 2:9,10). Every person in the world should bow now to King Jesus, for it is now that He reigns over all things in heaven and on earth.



ABREVIATIONS

OLD TESTAMENT

Genesis - **Gn**, Exodus - **Ex**, Leviticus - **Lv**, Numbers - **Nm**, Deuteronomy - **Dt**, Joshua - **Ja**, Judges - **Jg**, Ruth - **Rt**, 1 Samuel - **1 Sm**, 2 Samuel - **2 Sm**, 1 Kings - **1 Kg**, 2 Kings - **2 Kg**, 1 Chronicles - **1 Ch**, 2 Chronicles - **2 Ch**, Ezra - **Er**, Nehemiah - **Ne**, Esther - **Et**, Job - **Jb**, Psalms - **Ps**, Proverbs - **Pv**, Ecclesiastes - **Ec**, Song of Solomon - **Ss**, Isaiah - **Is**, Jeremiah - **Jr**, Lamentations - **Lm**, Ezekiel - **Ez**, Daniel - **Dn**, Hosea - **Hs**, Joel - **Jl**, Amos - **Am**, Obadiah - **Ob**, Jonah - **Jh**, Micah - **Mc**, Nahum - **Nh**, Habakkuk - **Hk**, Zephaniah - **Zp**, Haggai - **Hg**, Zechariah - **Zc**, Malachi - **Ml**

NEW TESTAMENT

Matthew - **Mt**, Mark - **Mk**, Luke - **Lk**, John - **Jn**, Acts - **At**, Romans - **Rm**, 1 Corinthians - **1 Co**, 2 Corinthians - **2 Co**, Galatians - **Gl**, Ephesians - **Ep**, Philippians - **Ph**, Colossians - **Cl**, 1 Thessalonians - **1 Th**, 2 Thessalonians - **2 Th**, 1 Timothy - **1 Tm**, 2 Timothy - **2 Tm**, Titus - **Ti**, Philemon - **Pl**, Hebrews - **Hb**, James - **Js**, 1 Peter - **1 Pt**, 2 Peter - **2 Pt**, 1 John - **1 Jn**, 2 John - **2 Jn**, 3 John - **3 Jn**, Jude - **Jd**, Revelation - **Rv**

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