

# PART THREE - THE CHURCH AGE

**TEXT: Eph. 3, emphasis vs. 6, 8-11, 20-21**

## I. THE CHURCH AGE.

### A. THE DIVINE MISSION OF CHRIST - TO ESTABLISH A KINGDOM.

1. Jewish and millennialist idea - a physical kingdom
2. Postponement theory.

"...We trust, however, that the reader would even without this discussion have perceived that the kingdom announced by John (and afterward by the Lord Jesus himself, (**Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:14-15**) could have been none other than that of Old Testament prophecy and of Jewish expectation in so far as that expectation accorded with the prophecies. ....If it be felt a difficulty that the kingdom though announced "at hand," has never yet appeared, we shall find an explanation unforced and natural, and one that will cast no reflection on the truth and goodness of God" (**Kingdom of God, by R. H. Boll**, page 34).

"We have now traced the kingdom-teaching of Matthew, and the kingdom gospel, from beginning to end. We have seen how the Old Testament hope of the Messianic kingdom of Israel and its world-wide sway was at first entirely in the foreground; how a crisis came when the opposition of Israel culminated in plans of murder; how then the Lord Jesus began to announce an entirely new and different aspect which his kingdom was to assume; and how thenceforth, not leaving out of view the Old Testament promise of the kingdom, the present, spiritual, veiled, suffering form of the kingdom of heaven, until he should come again, occupied the foreground of his teaching." (**page 46**).

"...if that was nationally rejected, the fulfillment of their prophetic hopes was thereby made impossible, and automatically deferred until the time when the nation would acknowledge Jesus Christ and be forgiven." (**page 46**).

"The only thing that ever stood between Israel and her glorious promises, kingdom and all, was her sinful condition. That removed, every other promise must necessarily be fulfilled to them, and that speedily. Whether there had been any formal offer of the kingdom made to them, and upon their rejection the same was withdrawn and postponed, is no essential matter. But if salvation was offered to the nation by Jesus, all else was implied therein as a matter of course; and if that was nationally rejected, the fulfillment of all their prophetic hopes was thereby made impossible, and automatically deferred, until the time when the nation would turn to acknowledge Jesus Christ and be forgiven" (**page 46**).

### B. THE INTEGRITY OF THE PROPHETS IS AT STAKE - POSTPONEMENT OR DEFAULT?

### C. THE ETERNAL PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH ( **Eph. 3:10-11** ). ETERNAL PURPOSE OR AFTERTHOUGHT?

1. "for ages hath been hid in God.
2. "according to his eternal purpose."
3. "made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God."
4. A reflection on God's wisdom - Not a glory ( **vs. 21** ).  
"unto all generations"

### D. THE DESCRIPTIVE TITLES OF THE CHURCH - Some contend that because "church" and "kingdom" are not synonymous they cannot be the same - but other figures used to describe the church don't mean the same thing.

1. House ( **1 Tim. 3:15** ), temple ( **Eph. 2:21** ), body ( **1 Cor. 12:27** ).
2. Kingdom ( **Luke 22:29-30** ), church ( **1 Cor. 10:21** ).

## II. THE KINGDOM OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY.

### A. NEBUDCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM ( **Dan. 2:44-45** ).

1. The Dream ( **vs. 31-35** ). The Image.
2. The Interpretation:
  - a. 4 kingdoms, - gold silver brass Iron & clay
  - b. Babylon Medo-Persia Macedonia Rome
3. Fulfillment:
  - a. "These Kings" ( **vs. 44** ).
  - b. "Time fulfilled" - "at hand" ( **Mark 1:14-15** ).
  - c. "Those kings" in power. THEN!!

### B. QUESTION: DID THE KINGDOM COME? MILLENIALISTS SAY NO. JEWS REJECTED, SO THE KINGDOM WAS POSTPONED. LET'S ENUMERATE THE MAJOR POINTS:

1. The kingdom of **Daniel 2:44** not yet in existence.
2. This kingdom though announced by John and Jesus has not appeared because national Israel rejected Jesus.
3. The kingdom postponed and the church age invented and introduced .
4. Jesus is king only "by right" and not "in fact."
5. Old Rome must return as well in order to fulfill **Daniel 2:44**.  
Hal Lindsey said it was in the "Common Market."
6. Restoration of Israel.
7. Solomon's temple rebuilt - Jewish system reinstated.
8. Jesus will leave his heavenly throne to occupy David's throne in Jerusalem.
9. Resurrection and living saints will be raptured.
10. An interval between "rapture" and 2nd coming called the "Tribulation" which the righteous will escape through the Rapture. Jesus will conclude the Tribulation by vanquishing the wicked nations and starting the Millennium.
11. This is all imminent - Lindsey; began in 1948, must conclude within one generation - 40 years.
12. After 1,000 years Satan musters his forces for Armageddon. Some believe that Armageddon ushers in the millennium.  
- physical warfare, victorious Christ - followed by heaven.

C. **QUESTION: SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?**

1. The postponement makes God's promise and Christ's teaching on the kingdom false.  
"The time is fulfilled"( **Mark 1:14-15** ).
2. The theory makes the church an accident( **Eph. 3:10-11** ).
3. Other consequences:
  - a. Denies that Jesus reigns now( **1 Cor. 15:25** ).
  - b. Nullifies Great Commission by denying all authority to Jesus( **Col. 3:17** ).
  - c. Denies passages that speak of this dispensation as last days( **Acts 2:16f.** ).
  - d. Denies Christ occupies David's throne, denying Gentile hope( **15:13-18** ).
  - e. Alternates Judaism and Christianity - type and anti type - revives law and ceremony of the law which Jesus nailed to the cross and buried in his tomb.
  - f. Same expectation that caused Jews to crucify Jesus.
  - g. Materialistic - emphasizes the flesh.
4. That New Spiritual Contingent Called the Church.

"Because the nation has rejected him, the Lord announces the severance of every natural tie by which He was bound the nation ( **Matt. 12:46-50**). From this announcement of the Lord concerning the rejection of the nation, definite movement may be traced in the withdrawal of the offer of the kingdom. In the parables ( **Matt. 13:1-50** ) the Lord outlines the program in the development of the theocratic kingdom during the period of the King's absence, and announces the inception of an entirely new, unheralded, and unexpected program -- the church ( **Matt. 16:13-20** ). He prepares the disciples for a long delay in the kingdom program as it relates to Israel ( **Luke 19:11-27** )....Thus we see the Lord is preparing the disciples for the withdrawal of the offer of the kingdom and the institution of a new program and age before the kingdom program is consummated." ( **J. Dwight Pentecost, Things to Come, 1964, p. 463-464** ).

"This whole mystery program was not revealed until after the rejection of Christ by Israel. It was after the rejection of **Matthew 12:23-24** that the Lord first makes a prophecy of the coming church in **Matthew 16:18**....The church is manifestly an interruption of God's program for Israel, which was not brought into being until Israel's rejection of the offer of the kingdom." ( **Pentecost, Things to Come, p. 201** ).

"...the present age is parenthesis or a time period not predicted by the Old Testament and therefore not fulfilling or advancing the program of events revealed in the Old Testament forever...If the church fulfills the Old Testament promises to Israel of a righteous kingdom on earth, the amillenarians are right. If the church does not fulfill these predictions and in fact is the fulfillment of a purpose of God not revealed until the New Testament, then the premillenarians are right." ( **John F. Walvoord, The Millenial Kingdom, 1957, p. 231** ).

5. Kingdom prophecies synchronized:
  - a. ( **Mark 1:14-15** ) The days of those kings ( **Dan. 2:44** ).  
Cannot be destroyed ( **Heb. 12:28** ).
  - b. ( **Dan. 7:13-14** ) To the Ancient of Days - to receive a kingdom  
( **Acts 1:6-9** ) The Ascension, following comments on the kingdom  
Holy Spirit, Power, Kingdom, Witnesses  
( **Mark 9:1** ) Stand here, **Kingdom - power**.  
( **Acts 2:1-4** ) Power, Holy Spirit, after ascension, witnesses presented...  
so - **KINGDOM**.
6. The Kingdom and Pentecost - Before and After.

BEFORE

**Mark 1:14-15**  
**Matt. 6:9-10**, "thy kingdom come"  
**Luke 23:50-51**, "waited for"  
**Mark 9:1**  
**Matt. 16:15-20**

AFTER

**Acts 8:12**  
**Acts 28:23**  
**Col. 1:13-14**  
**Heb. 1:8**  
**Heb. 12:28**  
**Rev. 1:9**

III. **THE REIGN OF CHRIST IN HIS KINGDOM.**

**KINGDOM USUALLY REFERS TO THE CHURCH**

- A. THE TWO STATES OF THE KINGDOM - 2 USAGES.
  1. ( **Col. 1:13** ). Church, the state of baptized believers
  2. ( **Acts 14:22; 2 Pet. 1:11** ). Heaven.
- B. THE **PERIOD** OF CHRIST'S REIGN ( **1 Cor. 15:20-26** ).
  1. **Raised** to sit on his throne( God's right hand ) ( **Acts 2:19-34** ).  
- till the **end** ( **1 Cor. 15:20-26** ).  
- till I make thy foes thy footstool ( **Acts 2:35** ).
  2. **Ascended** - sat on the throne ( **Heb. 1:3-13; vs. 3, 8, 13** ).
  3. When he made sacrifice for sin ( **Heb. 10:12-13** ).  
Must **reign** till he put all enemies under his feet.
- C. THE **TIMES OF RESTITUTION** ( **Acts 3:19-21** ).
  1. Whatever is during the times of restitution must have been prophesied  
"all things."
  2. The passage proves that these prophecies belong to the gospel age.
  3. Jesus cannot come until after this age is concluded. It is argued:

- a. These times concluded with the resurrection, and
- b. Jesus can't come until the resurrection.
- 6. But the resurrection signals the end, the return of the kingdom to God ( **1 Cor. 15:20-26** ).
- 7. The restoration ( **Matt. 17:9-13** ).
- D. THE RELATION OF CHRISTIANS TO THE REIGN OF CHRIST ( **1 Cor. 15:24; Rev. 5:8-10** ).
- If Christ reigns now, so do Christians, for they reign with him. Old Israel call a kingdom of priests **Exodus 19:6** ). So it is with the church ( **Rev. 1:6** ).
- What Israel was called the Church is called ( **1 Pet. 2:9** ).
- As a "kingdom of priests," we reign with Jesus ( **Eph. 2:5-6** ).
- 1. We reign in life through righteousness ( **Rom 5:17** ) "A declared state of judicial justification in which we are said to reign in life."
- 2. We reign with the apostles as we follow their teaching ( **1 Cor. 4:8** ).
- 3. We reign by righteous judgment ( **1 Cor. 6:2** ) - We judge through righteous teaching and conduct. Jeremiah set over the nations by his teachings ( **Jer.1:10** ). Apostles by theirs ( **Matt. 19:28** ).
- 4. We reign by enduring with patience ( **2 Tim 2:12** ). "We shall also live with him" ( **vs. 11** ). When? ( **Rom 6:10** ).
- 5. We reign by overcoming ( **Rev. 2:26-27** ). Those who overcome exercise a rule with a rod of iron through their teachings and lives. "Rod of Iron" refers to inexorable character of the rule in retribution and reward.

**QUESTION:** Does this not refer to the future? "Shall sit" "Shall reign"

Could be, in a sense, but...

( **John 6:51-58** ) "He that eateth shall live." When? ( **vs. 47, 53, 54** ).

**Rev 5:10**

We shall reign **basileusomen**. "they reign." Their reigning is not future, but **PRESENT TENSE**. (Vincent's Word Studies)

Present active indicative (Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament)

These expressions "shall" and "will" describe the means by which something is done - overcome "shall" sit, endureth "shall" reign, eateth "shall" live.

## VI. **WHY BRING CHRIST BACK TO EARTH?**

### **IF HE CAME BACK, WHAT IS LEFT FOR HIM TO DO?**

- A. HIS **MISSION OF REDEMPTION** IS COMPLETE ( **Eph. 1:7-10** ).
  - 1. We now have redemption and forgiveness ( **vs. 7-8** ).
  - 2. The mystery of the Old Testament prophecies made know now ( **vs. 9** ) in him!
  - 3. All things- all what things? - those things pertaining to "the mystery.", forgiveness, etc. - summed up in Christ in the "fulness of the times." ( **vs. 10** ).
- B. HIS **REVELATION** IS COMPLETE ( **Eph. 3:1-7** ).
  - 1. Understanding the mystery possible when we read what Paul wrote ( **vs. 4** ).
  - 2. Made know through the Holy Spirit ( **vs. 5** ).
  - 3. Specifically, our inheritance in Christ through the gospel ( **Jude 3; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3** ).
- C. HIS **AUTHORITY** IS COMPLETE ( **Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:36; Col. 1:18; 3:17** ). REFER TO THE GREAT COMMISSION, UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD.
- D. HIS **KINGDOM** IS COMPLETE ( **Col. 1:13** ).
  - 1. ( **Col. 1** ) deals with both the natural and spiritual worlds.
  - 2. The purpose is to show perfection of the divine order had been accomplished in both in Jesus.
  - 3. If the kingdom is not complete the comparison fails.
- E. HIS **THRONE** IS COMPLETE ( **Heb. 4:14; Rev. 3:21; Zech. 6:12-13** ).
- F. HIS **NAME** IS COMPLETE ( **Eph. 1:20-23** ). "ABOVE ALL..."
  - 1. "Rule"(principality) positions of authority in spiritual and physical realms.
  - 2. "Authority"(power) right or strength to rule.
  - 3. "Power"(might) ability to enforce rule ( **Psa. 2:7-9; Acts 13** ). Given at resurrection.
  - 4. "Name." What does the name represent? In this case all authority.
  - 5. "All things... under his feet."
  - 6. "Head of all things to the church."
- G. HIS **GLORY** IS COMPLETE ( **Luke 24:26** ).
  - 1. **John 17:5**. Glory asked for then.
  - 2. **Mat. 20:20-21**. Another's request "in thy kingdom "
  - 3. **Mark 10:37**. "In thy glory."
  - 4. **1 Pet. 1:21**. "Gave him glory." When?
  - 5. **John 17:1-11**. How much glory? ( **vs. 5, 10** ).
- H. HIS **WORK ON EARTH** IS COMPLETE ( **John 17:1** ).
  - 1. **vs. 4**. Jesus claimed his work finished. Finished or postponed?
  - 2. **vs. 4**. Glorified the father in a failure?
  - 3. **vs. 1**. "The hour is come." What hour?

4. Five important statements in **John 17**:
  - a. "I have glorified thee on the earth" ( **vs. 4** ).
  - b. "I have finished the work" ( **vs. 5** ).
  - c. "I have manifested thy name" ( **vs. 6** ).
  - d. "I am no more in the world" ( **vs. 11** ).
  - e. "I come to thee" ( **vs. 11** ).
- I. HIS **CHURCH** IS COMPLETE ( **Eph. 1:22-23** ).
  1. Church is the fullness of him
  2. He is the Christian's fullness ( **Col. 2:10; Eph. 1:3, 10** ).
- J. THE **CONQUEST** OF CHRIST **OVER SIN, SATAN** AND **DEATH** IS COMPLETE. ( **Heb. 2:14-15** ).
  1. Not possible unless the Strong Man bound ( **Matt. 12:29** ).
  2. Jesus did spoil Satan's good, so Satan is bound ( **Col. 2:14-15** ).
  3. "Led captivity captive" ( **Eph. 4:8** ).
  4. Satan's fall ( **Luke 10:18** ). As lightning - Swiftly.
  5. **1 Corinthians 15:55-57**.

**CONCLUSION: Eph. 3:21.**