

The True Israel of God — Parts 3 & 4

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III.

OUR Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is now sitting upon David's throne in the heavenlies, and those who are of the true Israel of God, are ruling and reigning with Him as children of the kingdom. This is what we shall consider in this section.

The angel Gabriel was sent of God to proclaim the gracious news to the virgin Mary that she was to be the mother of the Messiah: "And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:30-33).

We know from the words of our Lord himself as he stood before Pilate that the kingdom over which He would rule was not an earthly kingdom, but a spiritual: "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). And as the Amplified puts it: "My kingdom (kingly, royal power) belongs not to this world, has no such origin or source here." This to me is very emphatic that our Lord never came to set up an earthly kingdom, and it has never been in His eternal purpose to do so.

In Peter's message on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2, preaching under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he said that the prophecy of Christ sitting upon David's throne had been fulfilled. He said that Christ, then and there, was ruling and reigning upon the spiritual throne of David in the heavenlies. "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:29-36).

This states without contradiction, that the physical throne of David was a type and shadow of the spiritual throne of the greater David, the Lord Jesus Christ, and this throne is an everlasting throne, not an earthly throne for just 1000 years.

Every promise in the Old Testament where the future throne of David is mentioned (II Sam 7:16; Psa 89:3-4; Isa 9:6,7; 55:3; Jer 33:21), and every Scripture in the New Testament confirms Peter's statement of Christ ruling and reigning upon David's spiritual throne in heaven.

Let us look at a few in the New Testament: In Acts 5:31 we read: "Him [Christ] hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour" (Acts 5:31). "By the resurrection of Jesus Christ: who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (I Pet 3:21,22). "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:9-11). "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own 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 world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph 1:20-23). "All power [all authority] is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt 28:18). We have the complete picture of Christ ruling and reigning as Lord, as King over His people.

Having established the fact that Christ, the seed and offspring of David after the flesh, sits upon the throne of David in heaven, let us look at the promise made to David that his throne would be established for ever. This is set forth in II Samuel 7:16, "And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever." In verse 12 we see the promises were to be fulfilled through David's seed, and the Seed is Christ, "which was made of the seed of David" (Rom 1:3).

God promised that the seed of David would "build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever" (II Sam 7:13). The natural fulfillment of that promise came about when David's son, Solomon, built the first temple in Israel, but of course, disobedience caused Solomon's temple, throne and kingdom to crumble and disappear rather than survive for ever. The complete fulfillment of the promises to David occurred after Christ's death, resurrection and ascension (Acts 2:29-36).

So we see then that the house or temple that Solomon built for God's name was a natural type of the greater spiritual house of God, the church, true Israel, which was, and is, built by One "greater than Solomon" (Luke 11:31). Christ said: "I will build my church" (Matt 16:18); and for more than 19 centuries He has been doing exactly that, thus fulfilling God's promise that the seed would "build an house for my name" (Eph 2:19-22).

It is clear from Scripture that all the promises made to David have been fulfilled in Christ, and that Christ Jesus our Lord rules and reigns now upon His throne which fulfills Gabriel's words in Luke 1:32,33: "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God

shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob [over those who have the God of Jacob for their refuge, Psalm 46:7,11] for ever; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end.”

Our Lord in the parable given in Luke 19:12-27 says in verse 12, “A certain nobleman went into the far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.” Here he was speaking of Himself as He did receive this kingdom over which He rules and reigns. “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet” (I Cor 15:24-27).

These Scriptures agree with all that we are speaking of for we are told here that our blessed Lord did receive a kingdom when He went back to glory. He did rule from heaven sitting upon David’s spiritual throne and, praise His holy name, He still rules. God the Father gave Him this kingdom and He will reign until all things are put under His feet, even death (Eph 1:22).

But notice in these verses there is no time, no seven years, no thousand years, between verses 23 & 24. In verse 23 Christ is spoken of as the firstfruits of the resurrection. This was when He arose from the dead and went back to glory to receive His kingdom, to sit upon His throne and send the love-gift of His Spirit to His church as His reward for paying their sin-debt in full, to equip His church for its task in the world and to fill His people with his Spirit as their indwelling salvation. It is stated further in that 23rd verse: “Afterward, they that are Christ’s at his coming.” Here we have His Second Coming, that blessed hope of the true Israel of God, His church, when He shall come for them and “we shall for ever be with the Lord” (I Thess 4:17). Notice verse 24: “Then cometh the end.” There is no mention of any time period between our Lord’s Second Coming and the end of this age when He shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father. Why? Because there is none, and the rest of the New Testament agrees with this (Acts 3:19-21, John 5:28-29).

The Greek word here denotes sequence of time: “then,” next. What is the next order of events; it is the end of this age when Christ’s work as Mediator will be brought to an end and He delivers up the kingdom to the Father. Acts 3:19-21, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive [hold, retain] until the times of restitution of all things [until the final recovery of all things from sin which requires His office of Mediator], which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”

If you would carefully study the following Scriptures, you would note that all refer to the same Person and the same event, the Second Coming of Christ; and all of these are associated with the resurrection and the end of all things, for certainly there can be nothing beyond the last day and the last hour:

The last day (John 6:39,40,44,54)

The day of the Lord (Acts 2:20; I Thess 5:2; II Pet 3:10)

The day of the Lord Jesus (I Cor 5:5; II Cor 1:14)
 The day of the Lord Jesus Christ (I Cor 1:8)
 The day of Jesus Christ (Phil 1:6)
 The day of Christ (Phil 1:10; 2:16; II Thess 2:2)
 The day of God (II Pet 3:12; Rev 16:14)
 That day (Matt 7:22; 24:36; 26:29; Luke 10:12; II Thess 1:10; II Tim 1:12, 18)
 In the day (Rom 2:16)
 His day (Luke 17:24)
 The revelation of Christ (II Thess 1:7; I Pet 1:7)
 The appearing of Christ (I Tim 4:1-8; 6:14)
 The coming of Christ (I Cor 15:23; I Thess 2:19; James 5:7)
 That hour (Matt 24:36, 42; 25:13; Mark 13:32)
 An hour (Luke 12:40, 46)
 The hour (John 5:28)
 What hour (Rev 3:3)

Let us go further. The kingdom of God is not a natural, earthly, political kingdom that will be established at some uncertain date in a little country in the Near East. No, it is a present, eternal, universal, immovable and spiritual kingdom. Taken in its proper context, the Greek word translated “kingdom” in the New Testament does not mean a physical kingdom with a specific and limited location; it means the rule or reign or authority of God in the hearts and lives of His people, His church, the true Israel of God.

Again repeating what we said earlier: I Corinthians 15:45-46 teaches that God has always worked on the principle of first, the natural, then the spiritual. Here in regard to the kingdom of David and his seed, the greater David, this holds true. The kingdom of David, king of Israel, was a natural kingdom; the kingdom of God, manifested by Christ, the greater David, is a spiritual kingdom. It is the Lordship of Christ in the hearts of His people; it is His authority guiding and directing their lives. You see, when we read the words, “the kingdom of God,” we should read them as “the authority of God” or “the Lordship of God.”

Let us illustrate again by comparison. The kingdom of David was a kingdom of physical things like meat and drink, but the kingdom of God, the Lordship or authority of God, is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in Holy Spirit (Rom 14:17). The kingdom of David was a visible kingdom; it could be seen and observed. But, “the kingdom of God cometh not with observation...for, behold, the kingdom of God [the Lordship or authority of God] is within you” (Luke 17:20-21).

The kingdom of David was a kingdom of this world, but the kingdom of God, the Lordship or authority of God, “is not of this world” (John 18:36).

You could see the kingdom of David from adjoining countries and enter it by crossing its boundaries, but “except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God [the Lordship or authority of God]...except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God [the Lordship or authority of God]” (John 3:3,5).

All of this proves to me that the dispensationalist theory, that Christ came to re-establish the old Davidic kingdom at His first coming, and thereby bring “good government” to the world is all wrong. It is equally wrong to believe that He will come a second time to rule with a “literal” rod of iron and to reform society by enforcing high moral and ethical standards that the world otherwise was, and is, unwilling to obey. Our Lord said Himself in Mark 10:43 that enforced government is not God’s way, but man’s way of rule. His way is working quietly in the hearts of His people by His Holy Spirit drawing them into His kingdom with cords of love, making them willing to bow at His feet in humble confession and repentance, and taking His yoke upon them as an act of faith and obedience. Why? because they are His sheep whom He knows and calls by their names.

Also being a spiritual kingdom, the King who rules over it sits upon a throne that is “for ever and ever,” and has a “scepter of righteousness” (Heb 1:8); He is crowned with glory and honor (Heb 2:9); He is the “King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God” and to Him belongs “honor and glory for ever and ever” (I Tim 1:17); He is a priestly King “after the order of Melchisedec...king of righteousness, and king of peace” (Heb 6:20-22). Also He is King of kings and Lord of lords” (Rev 17:14).

Again the Scriptures picture Christ as “the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David” (Rev 5:5), who has chosen and continues to call out “a kingdom of priests” (I Pet 2:9; Rev 1:6; 5:10) to “show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light” (I Pet 2:9). These people, the church, the true Israel of God, “have been translated into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Col 1:13) and according to Romans 5:17 they reign in this life with Him. How? by His power given unto them. They reign over sin, the world, their circumstances, pain, adversity, tragedy and even death itself. They are “more than conquerors through him that loved them” (Rom 8:37).

Yes, the true Israel of God sings praises unto Him that sits upon the throne saying: “Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth” (Rev 5:9-10). Yes, we do reign and as we reign we shout with all the redeemed of all ages who make up the true Israel of God: “Alleluia, salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God...For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth” (Rev 19:1,6).

IV.

THE kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of Christ, the kingdom of our Lord is one and the same kingdom. This kingdom is a spiritual kingdom and means the rule, the authority, the supremacy of Christ in the hearts of men, those who have entered into it by the new birth.

Let us go to the Gospel of Luke and see how the expression: “The kingdom of God” is used; and to the Gospel of Matthew to see that “the kingdom of heaven” is used synonymously. These terms mean the same thing. In the Gospel of Luke the expression “the kingdom of God” is used in five different ways to show us its full meaning. It is God’s kingship; it is His rule or

sovereignty, recognized in the hearts and operative in the lives of His people, and effecting their complete salvation. Now watch as this unfolds to us according to the Gospel of Luke.

First, Luke speaks about preaching or proclaiming the kingdom of God. “Christ said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent” (Luke 4:43). “And it came to pass afterward, that Christ went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God” (Luke 8:1; cf Luke 9:2,60; 16:16). This truth of preaching the present rule and reign of God in the hearts of men was preaching the gospel as set forth in Mark 1:14-15 in these words: “And Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

Our Lord was not preaching that He had come to set up an earthly, material, physical kingdom, but that He had come, commissioned by God the Father to establish a spiritual kingdom in the hearts of His people and this would be accomplished by the gracious gospel of the grace of God toward poor hell-deserving sinners who would repent and believe Him as the King, the Messiah, the One sent down from heaven, the Saviour, God’s substitute for sinners.

Second, Luke speaks about entering the kingdom of God. In Luke 18:24,25 we read when Jesus saw that the rich young ruler was sad and sorrowful: “He said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God? For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.” Listen now as our Lord clarifies this for us! The only way in which we can enter into the kingdom of God is recorded in John 3:3,5 in these words by our Blessed Lord: “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” So this rules out any one entering into this kingdom of God except by the new birth, by the direct generating power of the Spirit of God upon the heart, making that individual a new creature and giving him a new heart and nature over which Christ rules as King.

The apostle Paul records: “Now, this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption” (I Cor 15:50). This rules out then a fleshly kingdom, a material kingdom of a thousand years here on earth. You see, our friends who claim that there will be an earthly kingdom made up of the Jew after the flesh, and of the nations of the earth who somehow miraculously come through a so-called battle of Armageddon, cannot get around this Scripture that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

This same truth is seen here: “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators nor idolaters, nor adulterers...nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (I Cor 6:9-10). So again we see that only by the new birth can you enter the kingdom of God, whether you be Jew or Gentile. “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (I Cor 6:11). So we see again that the expression, “the kingdom of God” is a spiritual kingdom and only we who are made holy in Christ shall enter into it.

“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God” (Eph 5:5). Besides proving again that no unsaved soul is in the kingdom of God and that it is a spiritual kingdom, we also have written for us very plainly that the kingdom of God and of Christ is the same kingdom. This Scripture should for ever shut the mouths of these who claim that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Christ are two different kingdoms. No, they are one and the same; call it what you will: the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ, or the kingdom of our Lord; it is a spiritual kingdom.

Thirdly, Luke says about the kingdom of God: “Seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Luke 12:31). “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt 6:33). Here we are shown the necessity of seeking the kingdom of God. When? “I have heard thee in a time accepted and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (II Cor 6:2). You see, the kingdom of God, His rule over your heart and life in salvation, is to be sought now, because when Christ comes, that ends it all. Then it will be too late, for there will be no second chance. Why? for then the day of judgment will be ushered in (John 5:28,29).

Let me cry aloud against this teaching that speaks of a chance after Christ comes, a chance for me to be saved in a so-called seven years tribulation period and 1000-year reign of Christ upon the earth. This is false! The Scripture knows nothing about this. The parable of the ten virgins as well as the rest of the New Testament teaches that when Christ comes the door will be shut, therefore we are told to watch, for it will be all over. “And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came: and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour, wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matt 25:10,11).

Fourthly, Luke says the kingdom of God is spiritual; it is within us. “And when Christ was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20,21). What is the meaning of these verses? The Pharisees and their many followers were looking forward to the arrival of an outward, earthly, visible kingdom, one in which the Jews would occupy a very prominent place. They were hardly able to wait for its arrival. So anxious were they to know when it would be established that they were willing to obtain information from anyone, even Jesus, their enemy.

Our Lord Jesus, however, in His answer told them that they had a misconception concerning the nature of the kingdom, as if it would arrive with loud proclamation, prancing horses, marching armies, parading bands, with “outward show.” If that were true, He said, then people would be greeting its arrival by shouting, “Here it is” or “There it is.” But our Lord declared that the kingdom, or Lordship, reign or rule of God, is basically spiritual in its essence. It is written inside a person. For you see, where ever God is truly recognized and honored as King, there one finds his kingdom or kingship.

Let me repeat it again: the kingdom of God and His Christ consist of inner qualities such as “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 14:17). These qualities exist wherever God is recognized as King. The same mistake is being made today: man is looking for an outward kingdom, but he is just as deceived as the first century Jews. If Christ had intended to set up an earthly kingdom of pomp and splendor, He would have gladly let His followers crown Him King, which they desired to do, but He would not: “When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone” (John 6:15).

Fifthly, although our Lord Jesus had spoken about His spiritual entrance into hearts and lives, that is, about God’s spiritual kingdom or Lordship, He never denies that there will be also a glorious visible manifestation of God’s kingdom at His Second Coming, for He speaks of His kingdom as yet in the future: “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourself thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God” (Luke 13:28-29). Also, “Fear not, little flock: for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom” (Luke 12:32).

Yes, there shall be a manifestation of this glorious kingdom when the Lord Jesus Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father (I Cor 15:24) and confess our names before Him in heaven; and we shall be in that eternal state of happiness and bliss with our new bodies made in the likeness of our Blessed Lord who bought us with the price of His own precious blood. Therefore, we look not for a partial restoration of this earth in a 1000-year earthly reign of our Lord, but for the complete restoration of all things in the eternal state in the new heaven and the new earth. “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (II Pet 3:13).