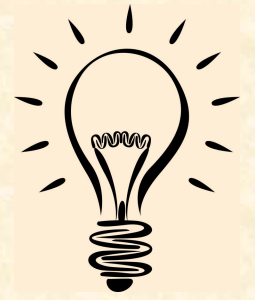


The Christian Light

Editor - Mitch Sparks



“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16).

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DID THE KINGDOM COME AT PENTECOST?

*Todd Clippard –Burlson church of Christ –
Hamilton, Alabama*

Among the many errors associated with what is known among us as the “A.D. 70 doctrine,” (a.k.a. Preterism or “the Max King doctrine”) concerns the establishment of the kingdom. Advocates of this error believe the eternal kingdom was not established until A.D. 70. Other events, such as the second coming of Jesus, the resurrection of the dead, and the Judgment, are also said to have taken place at that time. Other capable men will address the particular errors. My assignment is to determine if the kingdom was established in Acts 2 at Pentecost.

As we begin, we must note that while the ideas of the church and the kingdom are interchangeable, they are not **always** interchangeable. Sometimes the kingdom of God speaks of the church (cf. Col 1:13); at other times it speaks of heaven (cf. Matt 25:34).

A great place to begin this study is the Old Testament and its numerous prophecies concerning the kingdom. Of these, I believe Daniel 7:13-14 is the most revealing in answering our title question. It reads:

“I was watching in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed” (Dan 7:13-14).

What makes this prophecy particularly helpful is that the persons, phrases, and pictures are fulfilled only with a Pentecost advent of the kingdom. Let us begin this study by identifying **the persons** in this prophecy.

The “Son of Man” is the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus used this self-identifying moniker more than eighty times (cf. John 12:23-36; Matt 24:30). It is used of Jesus in his human form, a form glorified and retained after his ascension into heaven (cf. Acts 7:56; Phil 3:20-21).

“The Ancient of Days” is unique to Daniel 7 and no doubt refers to God himself (cf. v 9, 22).

Thus, we see Jesus brought with the clouds of heaven into the very presence of the Father. Question: At what point in the New Testament did this take place? The answer is obvious—when Jesus ascended into heaven with the clouds as recorded 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.” This text goes on to say that Jesus would return in the same manner in which he left (vv. 10-11). Now that we have identified the persons in verse 13, let us move to **the procession** which immediately follows in verse 14.

Immediately upon his ascension into heaven and escort into the presence of the Father, Jesus is given dominion, glory, and a kingdom. Jesus said this would be the case at the time of his ascension in Matthew 28:18 when he said, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth.” There is nothing in Daniel’s prophecy to indicate that some forty years would transpire between Jesus’ ascension and the reception of his kingdom, neither is there anything in the gospel accounts to indicate any such thing.

The first words of John the Baptizer were, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Matt 3:2). These are also the first words of the Lord at the outset of his public ministry (cf. Matt 4:17). In his first recorded sermon, Jesus looked forward to the coming of the kingdom (cf. Matt 5:19-20, 6:10). He used “church” and “kingdom” interchangeably in Matthew 16:13-19. Even a condemned thief understood the imminency of the kingdom (cf. Luke 23:42).

Shortly thereafter, following the events of Acts 2, the kingdom is spoken of in the present tense. What happened in Acts 2 that has direct bearing on this fact? The church was established!

After Pentecost but prior to A.D. 70, Paul assured the Colossians that both he and they had already been delivered “from the power of darkness and conveyed into the kingdom of the Son of His love” (1:13).

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Additionally, John spoke of himself as a companion in the kingdom of Jesus Christ alongside those of the seven churches of Asia (Rev 1:9). Clearly, the kingdom existed at the time of these two writings, and of necessity A.D. 70 advocates must believe Revelation was written prior to A.D. 70.

Finally, let us consider **the power** of Daniel's prophesied kingdom. According to the text, its scope included "all peoples, nations, and languages." This kingdom clearly refers to the church. The church is the only kingdom or institution to which all men must submit. The Mosaic Law did not apply to all men, but Israel alone (cf. Deut. 5:1-3; Eph 2:11-12). In contrast, the church is the body of Christ (Eph 1:22-23) and the kingdom in which men of every nation and language must be found should they desire to be saved at the Lord's second coming (1 Cor 15:23-24). The gospel is God's call to all men everywhere to enter the kingdom (Mark 16:15; Acts 8:12 2 Thess. 2:14). If the kingdom was not established until A.D. 70 at the coming of Jesus as A.D. 70 advocates affirm, then why does 1 Corinthians 15:23-24 say that when Jesus returns, he will deliver up the kingdom as opposed to establishing it? There can be no doubt the church of Christ was established on the first Pentecost following the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. The kingdom prophecy of Daniel 7 was fulfilled in the ascension of Jesus and the events of Pentecost in Acts 2. Thus, the kingdom prophesied by Daniel and preached by John and Jesus was established in Acts 2 at Pentecost.

THE KINGDOM THE PROPHETS SAW

Mitch Sparks – Bay church of Christ- Bay, AR

For many years there has been a false doctrine being taught throughout Christianity that teaches that the kingdom of God has not yet been established. The numerous individuals that teach this false doctrine call it "Premillennialism."

Premillennialists claim that Christ came to set up an earthly kingdom but failed and was forced to change His plans when the Jews rejected Him.

Premillennialism interprets every passage of Scripture regarding the kingdom to make the Scripture fit into their scheme of final things, and they are simply taking God's Word out of context and making it a lie.

Premillennialists claim that Christ will come back to the earth and set His kingdom up and reign on a literal throne on this literal earth for a literal thousand years and the Bible plainly refutes this false doctrine that was drawn up in the minds of men.

Let's look to the Bible for the correct answers and we will see "The Kingdom the Prophets Saw!"

(1) Jesus never intended to set up a material kingdom on earth (John 6:15). "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."

a. Their idea of the Messiah was one of physical power, and when Jesus thought that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king and try to make Him have earthly rule. Jesus would have nothing to do with their intentions, so He withdrew Himself and departed into a mountain alone.

(2) Jesus told Pilate that His Kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36). "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.*"

a. Jesus always looked for the best opportunity to teach others the truth regarding his kingdom. Jesus teaches the truth here to Pilate. Jesus is facing death in the face, but Jesus did not back down from teaching the truth about His kingdom.

b. "My kingdom is not of this world" – The kingdom of the Lord is not defined by strength of an army, or boundaries on a map. His kingdom is not ruled by tyrants who oppress the subjects of that kingdom. If His kingdom were of this world, then His servants would "fight" with worldly weapons and earthly means to protect their King. Certainly, Pilate had not missed the fact that Jesus' disciples were conspicuously absent. "but now is my kingdom not from hence" – Not only is it not of this world, it is not from this world; it does not derive its existence from battles fought and won, or dictates declared in the councils of governments" (Wacaster, 347, "The Magnificence of Jesus." A commentary on the Gospel of John, Vol. II).

(3) The Kingdom will stand forever (Dan. 2:44). "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

a. Daniel 2:31-45, is a prophecy concerning the kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar had seen in a dream an image of gold, silver, brass, and iron. These four metals represented four great world powers: Gold – represented the Babylonian empire, Silver – the Medo-Persian empire, Brass – the Grecian or Alexandrian empire, Iron – the Roman empire.

b. Daniel's interpretation and prophecy constitute one of the most amazing kingdom prophecies of the Old Testament, which is proof in establishing faith in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures and gives Christians a deep respect and admiration for the kingdom, which is "the church" (Matt.16:18,19; Heb. 12:22-29; Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:13-20).

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(4) The Kingdom was to come with power (Mark 9:1).

“And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.”

a. The power was to come when the Holy Spirit came on Pentecost (Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-4). The Holy Spirit coming on Pentecost, the power came upon the apostles, and through the preaching of the gospel through “Peter standing up with the eleven” (Acts 2:14), the power came that day establishing the kingdom (the church), and “they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41,47).

(5) The Kingdom was prophesied in the Old Testament (2 Sam. 7:12-16; Isa. 2:1-5; Joel 2:28-32).

a. *“And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. if he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever”* (2 Sam. 7:12-16). God through His covenant with David tells him that He will build David a house, a kingdom, the temple of God, the church a throne that will be established and will last forever, nothing can destroy the church. 2 Samuel 7 was fulfilled on Pentecost through the seed of David which was Christ (Acts 2:25-47; Luke 1:30-35).

b. *“The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the LORD”* (Isa. 2:1-5; Acts 2; Heb. 1:1-3; Acts 1:8). This prophecy was fulfilled and points directly to Pentecost.

c. *“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call”* (Joel 2:28-32; cf. Acts 2:17-22). This prophecy was fulfilled and points directly to Pentecost.

(6) The kingdom that the prophets saw was established shortly after the death of Christ on Pentecost. Jesus purchased the church with the shedding of His blood (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25-27). Jesus told Peter that He would build His church (Matt. 16:18). Then Peter used the keys of the kingdom that Jesus gave to him when those 3,000 souls were added to the church by the Lord (Matt. 16:19; Acts 2:36-47).

The Kingdom the Prophets saw and prophesied about throughout the Old Testament came to fruition and was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. When we take the Word of God and rightly divide it, then through our studies and through the Inspiration of God we can plainly defeat and refute a man-made false doctrine called “Premillennialism.”

Thank you for the many words of encouragement, and I hope and pray that this great work from “The Christian Light” and the many articles published help you Reflect, Refresh, and Renew your Christian Light each day.

Thanks, Mitch Sparks

From the Editor: If you or the congregation where you attend would like to receive this publication, please send us an email to thechristianlight1@gmail.com and in the subject line “Sign Up for The Christian Light.” Thanks, Mitch Sparks