

DANIEL 2: THE MESSIANIC KINGDOM

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Text:

Introduction:

- I. **Gerhard Pfandl:** “In Daniel 2 the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar sees in a dream the image of a man whose head is of gold, his breast and arms of silver, his abdomen and his thighs of bronze, his legs of iron, and his feet part iron and part clay. While viewing this picture the king sees a stone cut loose without hands smiting the statue upon its feet of iron and clay and demolishing the whole statue. The stone then becomes a huge mountain which fills the whole earth (Dan 2:32-35).
“In his interpretation, Daniel identifies the four metal parts of the statue as four successive kingdoms. The stone is the kingdom of God, which will crush and bring to an end all the kingdoms of this world and then stand forever (Dan 2:44).” (“Interpretations Of The Kingdom Of God In Daniel 2:44,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 34:2:249)
- A. The progressive **degradation** of value in the metals of the image probably symbolizes the **inferior nature** of each succeeding kingdom in some respect
- B. The fact that the stone was cut out of the mountain “**without hands**” indicates that this would be done **without human involvement or ingenuity** (cf. Job 34:20; Lam. 4:6; Dan. 8:25; 2 Cor. 5:1; Heb. 9:24)
 1. *Note:* **Idols** are described as the “**work of human hands**” or the equivalent (cf. Isa. 44:9-10; Jer. 10:1-5)
- C. The OT prophets often used the figure of a “**mountain**” to represent or symbolize a “**kingdom**” (cf. Isa. 13:4; 41:11-16; Jer. 51:24-26)
- D. The figure of a “mountain” is specifically used to symbolize **the Messianic kingdom** (cf. Isa. 2:2-4; Mic. 4:1-3; Dan. 2:35, 44-45)
- E. The fact that the mountain filled the whole earth indicates that the kingdom of God would be of **universal scope** (Psa. 2:8; Zech. 9:10)
- II. In the course of this study we will focus on three main things
 - A. The significance of the **great image**
 - B. The significance of **the stone** that became the great mountain
 - C. The significance of **this study**

Body:

- I. **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GREAT IMAGE**
 - A. The great image has been interpreted in several different ways
 1. In his book *Darius the Mede...*, H.H. Rowley catalogues thirteen different interpretations [See Appendix A]
 - B. We will briefly examine the **four major interpretations** of the giant image
 1. **The Liberal Critical View:**
 - a. The four kingdoms:
 - 1) The head of **gold** = **Babylon**
 - 2) The chest and arms of **silver** = **Media**
 - 3) The belly and thighs of **bronze** = **Persia**
 - 4) The legs of **iron** and feet of **iron and clay** = **Greece**

b. Argumentation:

- 1) The prophets had prophesied that Babylon would be conquered by the Medes (Isa. 13:17; Jer. 51:11)
- 2) There is evidence of an independent Median kingdom in the book of Daniel
 - a) The kingdom of Babylon was divided (i.e. partitioned) and given to the Medes and the Persians (Dan. 5:28)
 - b) The writer repeatedly emphasizes a racial distinction between Darius the Mede (Dan. 5:31; 9:1; 11:1) and Cyrus the Persian (Dan. 6:28; 10:1)
 - c) Darius the Mede ruled after Belshazzar and before Cyrus the Persian (Dan. 5:30-31; 6:28)
- 3) The description of the second kingdom as “inferior” to Babylon (Dan. 2:39) better fits an independent Median kingdom than the Medo-Persian empire
- 4) The description of the fourth kingdom fits the Grecian kingdom
 - a) The two legs of the image represent the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms into which the fourth kingdom was ultimately divided
 - b) The mingling “with the seed of men” (Dan. 2:43) is an allusion to the marriage alliances between the Seleucids and the Ptolemies
- 5) The kingdom of God is not established until after the four dynasties are destroyed

c. Refutation:

- 1) The prophets had prophesied that many nations would be involved in the destruction of Babylon (Isa. 21:2; Jer. 51:27-28), and the mere mention of the Medes does not in and of itself exclude the Persians
- 2) Daniel did not believe or teach that an independent Median kingdom took over from Babylon
 - a) Daniel interpreted the “handwriting on the wall” as indicating that the Babylonian kingdom would be given to the Medes and the Persians (Dan. 5:28)
 - 1] The Aramaic word “divided” (*perisath*) means to break in two and perhaps would be better translated “broken” which would not necessarily imply some kind of partitioning (Dan. 5:28)
 - b) In the story of Daniel and the lion’s den, Darius the Mede (Dan. 5:31) was bound by the unalterable “law of the Medes and Persians” (Dan. 6:8, 12, 15)
 - c) In the vision of the ram and he-goat, the ram with two horns represents “the kings of Media and Persia” (Dan. 8:20)
 - d) Other passages connect Media and Persia together as comprising one kingdom (Esth. 1:3, 14, 18-19; 10:2)
- 3) The racial distinction made between Darius and Cyrus proves nothing more than that the two men may have had different racial origins. It certainly does not prove that there was an independent Median kingdom
- 4) Nowhere does the book of Daniel unequivocally say that Darius the Mede ruled before Cyrus the Persian
 - a) Darius may have been a subordinate ruler under Cyrus
 - b) Darius may have been Cyrus
 - 1] **Joyce G. Baldwin:** “The suggestion requires that [Dan.] 6:28 be

translated, 'So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, that is, in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.' This is frequently the sense of the Hebrew particle which is usually the conjunction 'and', and indeed examples of it can be found elsewhere in this book: 'certain of the children of Israel, even of the seed royal' (1:3, RV); 'the document and interdict' (6:9) becomes simply 'the document' (verse 10), so proving that the writer regards these two words as synonymous. J. Barr, commenting on [Dan.] 7:1, notes 'Some think *and* here is explicative, "he saw a dream, that is, visions of his head".' Thus the usage is common, not only in Hebrew generally, but also in the style of the writer of Daniel.'" (*Daniel: An Introduction & Commentary*, 26-27)

- 5) There are two reasonable responses to the argument that the second kingdom was "inferior" to Babylon
 - a) The second kingdom may have been inferior to Babylon in some other way than in military might or in the size of the empire
 - 1] Bigness does not always mean greatness [cf. The U.S.S.R and the U.S.A.]
 - b) The language of the text may not be talking about inferiority at all
 - 1] **Charles Boufflower**: "[T]he two Aramaic words rendered 'inferior to thee' mean literally 'lower than thou.' This literal meaning is here to be preferred, and it must be understood in a strictly topical sense, 'below thee,' *i.e. lower down in the image....*" (*In And Around The Book Of Daniel*, 19-20)
- 6) The description of the third kingdom as "rul[ing] over all the earth" (Dan. 2:39) fits the Greeks much better than the Persians, since Persia never conquered Greece
- 7) While the description of the fourth kingdom may "fit" the Grecian kingdom, it also "fits" the Roman Empire
- 8) The idea that the kingdom of God would not be established until after the destruction of the four dynasties is simply not correct
 - a) The text clearly says "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed...." (Dan. 2:44)
 - b) Thus the Messianic kingdom would be established in the time of the fourth world empire, not sometime afterwards
- 9) This view would require that the Messianic kingdom be established before the end of the Grecian kingdom. Since that didn't happen, this would be an example of failed prophecy, and the consequences are devastating
 - a) If Daniel's prophecy failed, he is a false prophet (Dt. 18:20-22)
 - b) If Daniel is a false prophet, then his book is not inspired and therefore noncanonical
 - c) And since Jesus endorsed Daniel as a prophet (Mt. 24:15), he could not be the Messiah or the Son of God
- 10) The Liberal-Critical interpretation is largely based on the faulty presupposition that there can be no such thing as genuine predictive prophecy
 - a) This enables the liberal critic to hold the Maccabean date of authorship and effectively dispose of any predictive element (*i.e.* if the book was written in the Maccabean period then the Grecian kingdom would already have arrived)
 - b) **H.H. Rowley**: "That the Greek view commanded so long and

respectable an array of names amongst its supporters, prior to the establishment of the modern school, is a sufficient refutation of this unworthy remark. That since the establishment of the critical school, the Greek view has continued to be held by scholars of unimpeachable orthodoxy, is ample proof that the case for that view rests on a far more substantial basis than prejudice. J. Jahn, Rosenmuller, Zockler, and Wescott, to name no others, all of whom accepted the traditional date and authorship of the book adopted the Greek view of the interpretation of the fourth kingdom, and it is particularly interesting to observe that a number of writers have based their adoption of the Greek view on the express claim that this alone allows due fulfillment to the predictions. They have argued that according to the dream of chapter ii the Messiah was to appear after the destruction of the fourth empire, and that in accordance with this Christ was born just at the commencement of the Roman Empire, while in the vision of chapter vii the fourth beast was destroyed just before the coming of the 'son of man'." (*Darius The Mede And The Four World Empires In The Book Of Daniel*, 71-72)

- c) While some "orthodox scholars" may have adopted "the Greek view," this does not in any way prove that Liberal-Critical scholars are not greatly influenced by their anti-supernatural bias

2. Moses Stuart's View:

a. The four kingdoms:

- 1) The head of **gold** = **Babylon**
- 2) The chest and arms of **silver** = **Medo-Persia**
- 3) The belly and thighs of **bronze** = **Greece** (under Alexander)
- 4) The legs of **iron** and feet of **iron and clay** = **Greece** (under the Successors)

b. Argumentation:

- 1) *Note*: I was unable to find an explanation for this view

c. Refutation:

- 1) There is no indication whatever in the book of Daniel that the Greek kingdom was treated as two independent kingdoms during and after Alexander's time. Daniel viewed both phases of the kingdom as one kingdom
 - a) In the vision of the Four Beasts, the leopard is one animal with 4 heads (Dan. 7:6)
 - b) In the vision of the Ram and the He-Goat, the he-goat is one animal with 4 horns that came up to replace the large horn (Dan. 8:5-8)
 - c) The four horns represent four inferior kingdoms that arise out of that nation (Dan. 8:21-23)
- 2) The description of the fourth kingdom as "break[ing] in pieces and crush[ing] all the others" (Dan. 2:40) hardly fits the Seleucid kingdom since it was much weaker than its predecessor (cf. Dan. 7:7, 19)
 - a) **Gleason Archer, Jr.**: "Could one segment of Alexander's empire be considered more extensive than his entire realm? Or could its power be considered more formidable than that of Alexander himself – Alexander who never lost a battle? This theory cannot be taken seriously." (*Daniel, The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 7:48)
- 3) Once again, if this interpretation is correct, then the prophecy failed, and the consequences are devastating

3. The Dispensational Premillennial View:

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- a. The four kingdoms:
- 1) The head of **gold** = **Babylon**
 - 2) The chest and arms of **silver** = **Medo-Persia**
 - 3) The belly and thighs of **bronze** = **Greece**
 - 4) The legs of **iron** and feet of **iron and clay** = **Rome** (Ancient & Revived)
- b. Argumentation:
- 1) This prophecy must look to a Revived Roman Empire in the “last days,” because it was not literally fulfilled with Christ’s First Advent
 - a) The stone striking the image and shattering it to pieces suggests a world shaking, catastrophic event rather than the relatively slow progress of the church
 - 1] **A.C. Gaebelin**: “The Lord Jesus Christ in His first coming did not give the command that Gentile dominion should be broken through the Gospel, nor did He attack the Roman Empire, which was then in full control. Indeed the Roman Empire was officially the means of His blessed death on the cross. He did not smite the image; the image, so to speak, smote Him.” (*The Prophet Daniel*, 34)
 - 2] **Robert D. Culver**: “This passage predicts the complete victory of Messiah’s kingdom over the kingdoms of the world. Just such a complete victory is assigned to the Millennium (e.g., Rev 19; 20; Isa 2). The Church has not conquered the world and will not do so (Mt 13:24-30, 36-43, II Tim 3:1 ff.). The present age is to end in great apostasy rather than in the victory of the Church (II Thess 2).” (*The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, 781)
 - 3] **Robert D. Culver**: “The prophecy relates to the political fortunes of important empires of history. The fifth kingdom (Messianic) of this series is apparently no different in this respect from the others. Yet the Church (unless one takes a Roman Catholic point of view), is no political establishment. The Millennium has such a political aspect.” (*The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, 781)
 - b) The stone became a mountain that “filled the whole earth” (Dan. 2:35) suddenly, not gradually. Christianity has not “filled the whole earth” since Christ’s First Advent
 - 2) The ten toes of the image correspond to the ten horns of the fourth terrible beast (Dan. 7:7, 20, 24) which represent ten kingdoms which will arise out of a “revived” Roman Empire sometime in the future
- c. Refutation:
- 1) There is not even a hint of a “revived Roman Empire” in the text. This whole interpretation is based upon nothing more than assumption
 - a) First, that the image has **ten toes**
 - 1] **Jim McGuiggan**: “There is no mention anywhere in the vision that the image had ten toes. That it had ten may well be true; it might even be probably true; it may even be almost certain. *But major doctrines must not be based on assumptions, no matter how reasonable.*” (“The Book Of Daniel,” *Looking Into The Bible Series*, 49)
 - b) Second, that these ten toes correspond to the **ten horns** of the fourth terrible beast
 - 1] There is no conclusive evidence in the text to support this assumption
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- 2] It is not their **number** but their **composition** (i.e. “partly of iron and partly of clay”) that is emphasized to symbolize that “the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly fragile” (Dan. 2:42), not later subdivided into ten “little kingdoms”
 - 3] **Jim McGuiggan**: “Besides, if toes equal kingdoms, how many toes *did* the image have? Did the stone smite the image when it had ten toes? If so, how did it ever manage to get an eleventh? Daniel 7:7,8,20,24 specifically mentions an eleventh horn. *Did it arise BEFORE the stone smote the image or AFTER?* If it arose BEFORE the stone struck, then the image had eleven toes and then (since the 11th uprooted three) eight. So we don’t have a ten-toed image after all!
 “If the eleventh horn arose *after* the stone struck, it arose after the utter destruction of the whole image. That would have been too late to uproot three and leave eight. If it arose after the image was utterly destroyed we don’t have an image at all, we only have ONE TOE!” (“The Book Of Daniel,” *Looking Into The Bible Series*, 49)
 - c) Third, that these ten horns represent **ten kingdoms**
 - 1] In the interpretation of the dream, the ten horns are specifically identified as **ten kings**, not kingdoms (Dan. 7:24)
 - 2] Now, that’s not conclusive since a king may represent a kingdom (Dan. 2:38-40), but the term is certainly used of an individual ruler (Dan. 8:21)
 - 2) This interpretation does not harmonize with the NT’s teaching concerning the establishment of the Messianic kingdom
4. **Traditional Conservative View:**
- a. The four kingdoms:
 - 1) The head of **gold** = **Babylon** [605-539 BC] (Dan. 2:37-38)
 - a) OT writers ascribe Nebuchadnezzar’s power to divine providence (cf. Jer. 25:9; 27:5-6; 28:14)
 - b) The description of Babylon as the head of gold is consistent with other descriptions (cf. Isa. 13:19; 14:4; 47:5; Jer. 51:13, 41)
 - c) **Charles Boufflower**: “Herodotus, who was at Babylon some ninety years after the era of Nebuchadnezzar, was struck with astonishment at the amount of gold which he found within the precincts of the sanctuary of Bel.” (*In And Around The Book Of Daniel*, 25)
 - 2) The chest and arms of **silver** = **Medo-Persia** [539-331 BC] (Dan. 5:28; 8:20)
 - a) The Medo-Persians were vastly larger and more powerful than Babylon
 - 3) The belly and thighs of **bronze** = **Greece** [331-165 BC] (Dan. 8:20-21; 10:20; 11:2-4; cf. 1 Macc. 1:1)
 - a) **Albert Barnes**: “The Greeks were distinguished for their *brazen armour*, and the appellation, *the brazen-coated Greeks*...is that by which they were designated most commonly by the ancients. – *Il.* i. 371; ii. 47; *Od.* i. 286.” (“Daniel,” *Barnes’ Notes*, 162)
 - 4) The legs of **iron** and feet of **iron and clay** = **Rome** [63 BC-476 AD]
 - a) **Charles Boufflower**: “Iron is a poor description of the Greek kingdom, but a very telling description of the Roman. Further, in passing from the third to the fourth kingdom, we are actually passing from a bronze to an iron age. To the Roman poets bronze weapons spoke of the olden time.
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.... Iron, to be sure, was in use long before the coming of the Romans, but at the time of the development of the Republic into a world-power its use became much more general. Iron swords and breast-plates took the place of bronze. The change, as Lucretius points out, was a gradual one, and it was contemporary with the rise of the Roman power. During that period both of these metals were employed in the making of arms and armour.” (*In And Around The Book Of Daniel*, 31)

- b) **Robert D. Culver:** “Rome fragmented and reassembled – socially, culturally, and politically – all the peoples, institutions, etc., it took over. The only notable exception was Christianity itself as a spiritual movement (albeit truly Romanized in the perversion of the Roman Church).” (*The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, 780)
- c) Some see in the two legs a prophecy of the division of the empire into two parts with capitals at Rome and Constantinople
- d) **Paul Butler:** “The Roman war machine was many times more destructive than any of its predecessors.” (“Daniel,” *Bible Study Textbook Series*, 102)

b. Argumentation:

- 1) With but relatively few exceptions, this was the accepted interpretation of this passage until the 19th century
 - a) 4 Ezra 12:10-12 describes an eagle with twelve wings that is likened to the fourth beast of Daniel and cryptically identified as Rome
 - b) Josephus apparently identifies the fourth beast as Rome (*The Antiquities of the Jews*, 10:11:7(276))
 - c) The Babylonian Talmud consistently interprets the fourth kingdom as Rome (cf. *‘Abodah Zarah 2b*)
 - d) Most of the Christian interpreters during the first few centuries, understood the four kingdoms in Daniel 2 to be Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome
 - e) **Gerhard Pfandl:** “Exceptions to this general consensus were the Neoplatonist, non-Christian philosopher Porphyry (233-304); Ephraem Syrus (306-373), the greatest light of the Syrian church; and Polychronius (d. 430), bishop of Apamea and brother of Theodore of Mopsuestia, who identified the fourth kingdom as Greece or the various Grecian kingdoms following the demise of the Alexandrian empire. This view, however, never won general acceptance in their time.
 “Thus Cyril of Jerusalem (301-386) could say: That this fourth kingdom ‘is that of the Romans has been the tradition of the Church’s interpreters.’ This tradition was continued by John Chrystom (344-407) and Jerome (345-413), who wrote in his commentary on Daniel: ‘Now the fourth empire, which clearly refers to the Romans, is the iron empire which breaks in pieces and overcomes all others.’” (“Interpretations Of The Kingdom Of God In Daniel 2:44,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 34:2:251)
 - f) **Gerhard Pfandl:** “In general the view of the early interpreters concerning the four kingdoms was accepted in the church throughout the Middle Ages and the Reformation era.” (“Interpretations Of The Kingdom Of God In Daniel 2:44,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies*, 34:2:257)
 - g) **Martin Luther** [1483-1546]: “The first kingdom is that of the Assyrians or Babylonians; the second, that of the Medes and Persians; the third, that of Alexander the Great and the Greeks; the fourth, that of the Romans. Everyone agrees on this view and interpretation; subsequent events and the histories prove it conclusively.” (“Preface to the Prophet Daniel,” LW. 35:295)

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- 2) Christianity was born during the days of the Roman Empire
 - a) Jesus was born during the reign of **Caesar Augustus** (Lk. 2:1-7)
 - b) John the Baptist began his work as the Messiah's forerunner during the reign of **Tiberius Caesar** (Lk. 3:1-6)
 - c) Jesus taught the Jews to "Render unto **Caesar** the things that are Caesar's...." (Mt. 22:21)
 - d) The brethren in Judea were afflicted by a famine in the days of **Claudius Caesar** (Acts 11:27-30)
 - e) Aquila and Priscilla were expelled from Rome by **Claudius Caesar** (Acts 18:1-2)
 - f) Paul appealed to "**Caesar's judgment seat**" in the days of **Nero** (Acts 25:10-12; 28:19)
 - g) Christians from **Caesar's household** sent greetings to the saints in Philippi (Phil. 4:22)
 - c. Objections:
 - 1) The dream depicted the stone destroying the **whole image**, not just the feet and legs, and that didn't happen with Christ's First Advent
 - a) Daniel's explanation of the dream clearly indicates that these kingdoms would succeed one another (Dan. 2:39-40)
 - 1] **Albert Barnes:** "[A]s it cannot be argued that because Nebuchadnezzar saw the whole image at the outset standing in its complete form, that *therefore* all these kingdoms must have been simultaneously in existence, so it cannot be argued because he saw the whole image standing when the stone smote upon it, that *therefore* all these kingdoms must have had an existence then." ("Daniel," *Barnes' Notes*, 175-176)
 - b) Furthermore, each of these succeeding kingdoms incorporated much of the culture and the territory of their predecessor(s)
 - 1] In other words, the destruction of Rome was the destruction of the preceding kingdoms since they were embodied in Rome
 - 2] **Edward J. Young:** "[W]hile distinct, these four kingdoms were also in a sense one. Medo-Persia conquered and incorporated Babylon. Greece did the same to Medo-Persia. and while Rome never conquered all of Alexander's empire, she did conquer much of it and the extent of the Roman Empire was far greater and more world-wide than any of the others." (*The Prophecy of Daniel: A Commentary*, 78)
 - 2) The dream depicted the stone destroying the whole image, **suddenly** and **catastrophically**, and that didn't happen with Christ's First Advent
 - a) Where does the text speak of "suddenness"? It speaks of an utter destruction, but where does it speak of "suddenness"?
 - 1] **Jim McGuigan:** "Should it be replied that in the vision it all happens in a moment, it wouldn't hurt to remember that from the head to the feet covers (at least) 562 'before Christ' years. However, time is not in view. How do you get *suddenness* out of the text?" ("The Book Of Daniel," *Looking Into The Bible Series*, 50)
 - 2] The picture does not demand that the other kingdoms be "conquered" all at once as opposed to gradually
 - b) And how long did it take the Lord Jesus Christ to gain royal dominion
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when God set him at his own right hand in heavenly places far above all principality and power and might and dominion? (cf. Eph. 1:20-23; 1 Pet. 3:22)

- c) Furthermore, there is nothing in the text that demands some kind of a military conquest
 - 1] The picture implies some kind of force, but it does not demand physical force as opposed to spiritual force
 - 2] Christ's kingdom is not gained by or based on military might or carnal warfare (Jn. 18:36; 2 Cor. 10:3-6)
- 3) The dream depicted the destruction of the whole image **before** the establishment of the kingdom of God, and that didn't happen with Christ's First Advent
 - a) The kingdom of God was to be set up "in the days of these kings" (Dan. 2:44), while the fourth kingdom was still in existence
- 4) The dream implies that **all other world monarchies would end** with the establishment of the kingdom of God, and that didn't happen with Christ's First Advent
 - a) There is nothing in the prophecy that necessarily implies this. The prophecy indicates that the kingdom of God would destroy the four kingdoms mentioned, but it says nothing about its impact upon other world empires
- 5) The dream depicted the stone becoming a mountain and **filling the whole earth**, and that didn't happen with Christ's First Advent
 - a) The gospel was proclaimed throughout the world (Col. 1:6, 23)
 - b) The sovereignty or dominion of the Messiah is worldwide (Mt. 28:18)

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STONE THAT BECAME A GREAT MOUNTAIN

- A. Many of the "Church Fathers" believed that the stone was **Christ** and that the **virgin birth** was symbolized by the fact that it was "cut out of the mountain **without hands**" (Dan. 2:34, 45)
 - 1. [See Appendix B]
 - 2. There is at least some warrant for this interpretation since:
 - a. Several "**stone texts**" in the OT are applied by NT writers to Christ
 - 1) He is the **stone of stumbling** and **rock of offense** (Isa. 8:14-15; cf. Lk. 2:34; 20:17-18; Rom. 9:30-33; 1 Pet. 2:4-8)
 - 2) He is the **chief corner stone** (Isa. 28:16; cf. Rom. 9:30-33; 10:11; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-8)
 - 3) He is the **rejected stone** that becomes the **chief cornerstone** (Psa. 118:22; Mt. 21:42-44; Mk. 12:10-11; Lk. 20:17-18; Acts 4:10-12; 1 Pet. 2:4-8)
 - b. To the Hebrew mind, a **king** represented his **kingdom** (Dan. 2:38)
 - 1) **Edward F. Siegman**: "Since the stone is explicitly identified (vv. 44-45), it may seem unreasonable that it should be explained as the personal Messiah. An implicit reference to the Messiah cannot be dismissed as absurd, however, if it is kept in mind how readily the Semitic mind passes from the group to the person who represents and sums it up, from the kingdom to its king, in virtue of what has been called 'totality thinking.'" ("The Stone Hewn From The Mountain," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, October, 1956, 18:4:370)
 - 3. But this interpretation must be rejected since the **stone** is explicitly identified as the

kingdom that God would establish (Dan. 2:44-45)

- B. According to George E. Ladd, there have been **four major interpretations** of the stone that became a great mountain
1. **The Sociological View:** The stone represents the **ideal social order**
 - a. This is the interpretation of the **post-millennialists**
 - 1) **George E. Ladd:** “The *sociological* interpretation views the Kingdom as the ideal social order to be achieved on earth by the church.” (“The Kingdom Of God And The Church,” *Foundations: A Baptist Journal Of History And Theology*, April, 1961, 4:2:167)
 - b. This is also the interpretation of **Ritschlian theology**
 - 1) **George E. Ladd:** “The Kingdom of God is the ideal social order in which men learn to enjoy a relation to God as sons and to one another as brothers. It is humanity organized according to the will of God, the Christian transfiguration of the social order, the establishment of a community of righteousness in mankind. This new society of the Kingdom of God will be achieved by the reign of love. It is in short the recognition of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. The achievement of such a transformed society is the object of all individual endeavor. The Kingdom is always the sociological goal of the church and is to be achieved by gradual development. The popular form of this view looks to the church to build the Kingdom of God on earth.” (“The Kingdom Of God And The Church,” *Foundations: A Baptist Journal Of History And Theology*, April, 1961, 4:2:167)
 - c. This interpretation must be rejected, because it cannot do justice to:
 - 1) Jesus’ statement: **“My kingdom is not of this world....”** (Jn. 18:36)
 - a) Jesus came to **“seek and to save that which was lost”** (Lk. 19:10), not to create a **sociological utopia** here on earth
 - 2) The **eschatological aspects** of the kingdom
 - a) The Christian’s hope lies in the “inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away” (1 Pet. 1:4) in **“the everlasting kingdom”** (2 Pet. 1:11)
 2. **The Eschatological View:** The stone represents the **eschatological kingdom of Christ**
 - a. This is the interpretation of the **Dispensational Premillennialists**
 - 1) **George E. Ladd:** “The Kingdom of God by definition is the earthly Kingdom promised to Israel in the Old Testament in which the Jewish people will rule over the Gentile nations of earth. Jesus offered the Jews this Davidic Kingdom. When they rejected it, it was postponed and will be finally established as the millennial Kingdom of Christ at his Second Coming. In the parenthesis period between the rejection and the coming of the Kingdom, God is doing a new thing unforeseen in the Old Testament. He is creating the church, the body and bride of Christ. The Kingdom does not belong to the church but to Israel. Christ is not the King of the church but its Lord.” (“The Kingdom Of God And The Church,” *Foundations: A Baptist Journal Of History And Theology*, April, 1961, 4:2:165-166)
 - b. Dispensationalists teach that during the parenthesis between the two advents of Christ, the Kingdom, though postponed, assumes a **“mystery form”** which is the external, professing, **visible church**
 - c. This “mystery form” of the Kingdom is destined to become decadent, apostate and corrupt at the end of the age
 - 1) **George E. Ladd:** “This system sees no present relationship between the church and the Kingdom. The Jews are the people of the Kingdom; the true church is the bride of Christ. Israel and the church must not be confused.

Neither must the true invisible church be confused with the Kingdom in mystery form – apostate, corrupt Christendom.” (“The Kingdom Of God And The Church,” *Foundations: A Baptist Journal Of History And Theology*, April, 1961, 4:2:166)

- d. This interpretation must be rejected, because it cannot be harmonized with:
- 1) The “**air of expectancy**” that existed in the first century for the kingdom (cf. Lk. 2:25, 38; 23:42, 50-51; Acts 1:6)
 - 2) The proclamations of **proximate fulfillment** (cf. Mt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Lk. 10:9, 11)
 - 3) Jesus’ specific declaration that “**the time is fulfilled**, and the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mk. 1:15)
 - a) If Daniel looked to the 21st century, then dispensationalists are right and Jesus was wrong!
 - b) If Daniel looked to the 1st century, then Jesus was right and dispensationalists are wrong!
 - c) **Jim McGuiggan**: “Any interpretation of the image which relegates the fulfillment to a period after the days of those kings cannot be correct.” (“The Book Of Daniel,” *Looking Into The Bible Series*, 54)
 - 4) Jesus’ specific declaration that some of His contemporaries would **not die** until they saw the kingdom present with power (Mt. 16:28; Mk. 9:1; Lk. 9:27)
 - a) That statement leaves us with but **four possibilities**
 - 1] Jesus **lied**
 - 2] Jesus was **mistaken**
 - 3] There’s some awfully **old people** walking around
 - 4] **The kingdom came** in the lifetime of Jesus’ contemporaries
 - b) Only the last possibility makes any sense at all
 - 5) Christ’s claim to “**all authority**” (Mt. 28:18; Lk. 22:69)
 - 6) The repeated announcements of the **kingdom’s existence** after Pentecost
 - a) Christ is reigning on David’s throne (Acts 2:29-36; 5:31)
 - b) Jesus is King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 1:5; 17:14; 19:16)
 - c) Philip preached the good news about the kingdom (Acts 8:12)
 - d) Early Christians proclaimed Jesus as King (Acts 17:6-7)
 - e) Paul preached the kingdom (Acts 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 30-31)
 - f) The Colossians were translated into the kingdom (Col. 1:13-14)
 - g) The Thessalonians were called into the kingdom (1 Th. 2:12)
 - h) The Hebrew Christians received a kingdom (Heb. 12:28)
 - i) John was a partaker in the kingdom (Rev. 1:6, 9)
 - j) Men of every tribe and tongue were made a kingdom (Rev. 5:9-10)
 - 7) The declaration that at the Final Coming, Christ will “**deliver up**,” rather than “**set up**,” the kingdom (1 Cor. 15:24-28)
3. **The Ecclesiological View**: The stone represents the “**Church of Christ**”
- a. **George E. Ladd**: “The *ecclesiological* interpretation of the Kingdom in one way

or another equates the Kingdom and the church. The Kingdom is composed of the people who are subject to the rule of God or who share his rule.” (“The Kingdom Of God And The Church,” *Foundations*, April, 1961, 4:2:164)

- b. According to Ladd, **Augustine** was the first to formulate this interpretation
- 1) **Augustine** [354-430]: “Therefore, the Church even now is the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, even now his saints reign with Him.” (*The City of God*, 20:9 NPNF, 1st series, 2:430)
 - 2) **Augustine** [354-430]: “Now then was the stone cut out without hands before the eyes of the Jews, but it was humble. Not without reason; because not yet had that stone increased and filled the whole earth that He showed in His kingdom, which is the Church, with which He has filled the whole face of the earth.” (*Tractate 4 on the Gospel of John* 4.4, NPNF, 1st series, 7:26)
 - 3) **George E. Ladd**: “Augustine meant primarily that the saints are the Kingdom of Christ and share his reign. In this sense, the Kingdom is not identical with the totality of the visible church but only with the pious and holy within the church; for Augustine recognized that within the visible church there were both good and bad, saints and wicked men. Nevertheless, Augustine went further and identified the Kingdom of Christ with the episcopally organized church. From this source developed the Roman Catholic identification of the church and the Kingdom.” (“The Kingdom Of God And The Church,” *Foundations: A Baptist Journal Of History And Theology*, April, 1961, 4:2:164)
- c. This was the interpretation that I was taught, growing up in the 60’s, and it is still the interpretation that the average “person in the pew” believes to be correct
- d. But I have come to believe that at best this interpretation is an **oversimplification** and at worst a downright **misrepresentation** of the facts
- 1) It’s hard to make sense out of a great many passages, if you try to substitute the word “**church**” for the word “**kingdom**”
 - a) Mt. 6:33: Is he saying “Seek first the church...”? (Lk. 12:31)
 - 1] If He is, which church is He talking about? The universal church or the local church?
 - 2] It would have to be the universal church, but how can one find it? It has no **address**, no **phone number**, no **place of assembly**, etc.
 - b) Mt. 11:11-12: Were the violent taking the church by force?
 - c) Mt. 12:28: When Jesus cast out demons did that signal the coming of the church? (Lk. 11:20)
 - d) Mt. 13:19, 24, 38, 41: How can the kingdom in the Parable of the Tares be the church?
 - e) Mt. 21:43: Was it the church that was taken away from the Jews?
 - f) Mk. 10:15: How would one receive the church as a little child?
 - g) Lk. 12:32: Was it the church that was given to the “little flock”? (cf. Lk. 22:29-30)
 - h) Lk. 17:20-21: Did the church come with observation on the day of Pentecost? How is the church “**within you**”?
 - i) Lk. 19:11-12, 15: In the Parable of the Pounds, what did the nobleman receive when he “went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom....”?
 - j) Lk. 21:31: When Jerusalem was destroyed, did that signal the nearness of the church?

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- k) Acts 1:6: Was the church restored to Israel?
 - l) 1 Cor. 4:20-21: Is it the church that is not in word but in power?
 - m) 1 Cor. 15:50: Is it the church that is not inherited by flesh and blood?
- 2) The church does not live up to the demands of kingdom prophecy
- a) **Jim McGuiggan:** “In the place of the world-wide kingdom of the Old Testament prophecies we offer the Church, which, for all its beauty and importance, is a tiny light in a world of darkness, paganism and evil. In the place of a grand and wonderful rule of God we’ve offered a band of people who are losing ground in the fight against evil as quickly as they are losing the race against the population explosion. We have construed the Kingdom of God to be a body of Christians (with all their weaknesses) rather than the Reign of Christ over all and everyone.” (*The Kingdom Of God And The Planet Earth*, 99)
4. **The Theological View:** The stone represents the **present Messianic rule and reign of Christ**
- a. **George E. Ladd:** “The view which we believe to be required by the New Testament data may be called the *theological* view, because it finds the fundamental meaning of the Kingdom of God not in the church nor in an eschatological order nor in an earthly social order but in the redemptive rule of God himself. One of the most valuable achievements of critical Biblical theology has been the discovery that the Kingdom of God is not primarily a people nor a realm nor a social order but the dynamic rule of God. The Kingdom must always be God-centered.” (“The Kingdom Of God And The Church,” *Foundations: A Baptist Journal Of History And Theology*, April, 1961, 4:2:168)
 - b. I have become convinced that the term “**kingdom**” primarily refers to Christ’s **power**, not His **people**, Christ’s **rule**, not the **realm** over which He rules. In other words, I do not believe that the term “**kingdom**” primarily refers to the “**church**”
 - 1) There is evidence of this in Daniel’s interpretation – **the kingdom** is distinguished from **the people** who possess it (Dan. 2:44; cf. 7:14, 18, 22, 27; Lk. 22:28-30)
 - a) If the church is God’s people and they possess the “kingdom,” how can the “kingdom” and the “church” be one and the same thing?
 - 2) The **lexicographers** define the term “kingdom” primarily as a reference to the **power** of a king
 - a) [See Appendix C]
 - b) If we accept their definitions of the term “**baptism**,” why shouldn’t we accept their definitions of the term “**kingdom**”?
 - 3) Many **commentators** concur
 - a) [See Appendix D]
 - 4) **Biblical usage** indicates that the term “kingdom” is primarily an abstract noun referring to the **rule, reign, authority, dominion, and sovereignty** of a king
 - a) **Hebrew parallelism** (cf. 1 Chr. 29:11; Psa. 22:28; 103:19; 145:11, 13; Dan. 4:3, 34; 6:26; 7:14, 27; Lk. 1:33)
 - b) **Associated terms** (Dan. 2:37; Mic. 4:8; Acts 8:12; 1 Cor. 15:24; Col. 1:13; Rev. 12:10)
 - c) **Explanatory phrases** (Mt. 6:10; Lk. 11:2)
 - 5) Thus, the term “kingdom,” as it is used in the Bible, refers primarily to the **rule, reign, authority, dominion, and sovereignty** of a king
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- a) Sometimes the word “kingdom” refers by metonymy to **the people** who are ruled by Christ which are collectively called the “**church**,” but this is not its primary meaning, and I believe that the metonymical use of the term is relatively rare
 - b) That means that when we see the word “**kingdom**” in the Bible, we ought to think **rule, reign, authority, dominion, or sovereignty** first
 - 1] Ordinarily, when we use the word “kingdom” today, we think **subjects or territory**
 - 2] But this is not the basic meaning of the term in the Bible
 - c) Only when the context indicates it should we think of subjects or territory
 - 6) Lest there be any misunderstanding, I am not saying that:
 - a) The church was an afterthought (Eph. 3:10-11)
 - b) The church was not prophesied of in the OT
 - 1] The church is the people who come to the mountain (Isa. 2:2-4)
 - c) The church was not established on Pentecost
 - d) The kingdom has not been established
 - 7) I am saying that the term “**kingdom**,” as it is most often used in Scripture, refers to a king’s **power**, not his **people**
 - 8) **Objection:** The same things are said about both the “**kingdom**” and the “**church**”; therefore they must be the same thing
 - a) The same things are said about the **Holy Spirit** and the **word of God**, are they the same thing?
 - b) This argument demonstrates that there is some **relationship** between the “kingdom” and the “church,” but it hardly proves **identity** if there is compelling contextual evidence to the contrary
 - 9) Actually, the term “**kingdom**” can mean different things according to the context
 - a) **Territory** (cf. Gen. 10:10; Num. 32:33; Dt. 3:4, 10, 13, 21; Josh. 13:12, 21, 27, 30-31; 1 Ki. 4:21; 2 Chr. 36:22-23; Ezra 1:1-2; Neh. 9:22; Esth. 2:3; 3:6, 8; 5:3, 6; 7:2; 9:30; Dan. 6:1, 7, 26; 11:4, 9; Mt. 4:8; Mk. 6:23; Lk. 4:5)
 - b) **People** (cf. Ex. 19:6; 2 Sam. 3:28; 1 Ki. 12:26-27; 18:10; 2 Ki. 19:19; Psa. 46:6; 68:32; 79:6; 102:22; 105:13; Isa. 60:12; Jer. 27:8; Nah. 3:5; Zeph. 3:8; Rev. 1:5-6; 5:9-10)
 - c) **Rule** (cf. Num. 24:7; 1 Sam. 13:13-14; 15:28; 20:31; 2 Sam. 5:12; 7:12-13, 16; 16:3, 8; 1 Ki. 2:12, 15, 22, 46; 9:5; 1 Chr. 12:23; 14:2; 1 Chr. 17:11-12, 14; 22:10; 28:5-7; 2 Chr. 13:8; Psa. 45:6; Isa. 9:6-7; Dan. 2:44; 4:17, 25-26, 31-32, 36; 5:18, 21, 26, 28; 7:18, 22; Mt. 6:10, 33; 11:12; 21:23; Mk. 10:15; 11:10; Lk. 1:33; 11:2; 12:31-32; 16:16; 17:20-21; 18:17; 19:11-12, 15; 22:29-30; 23:42, 51; Jn. 18:36; Acts 1:6; 8:12; 28:23, 31; Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; 15:24; Col. 1:13; 1 Th. 2:12; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 1:8; Rev. 1:9; 17:12, 17)
 - d) **Manifestation** (cf. Mt. 12:28; 16:28; Mk. 9:1; Lk. 10:9, 11; 11:20; 21:31; Rev. 11:15; 12:10)
 - e) **Heavenly Kingdom** (cf. Mt. 7:21-23; 8:11-12; 13:43; 25:34; Mk. 9:47; 10:23-25; Lk. 13:28-30; Jn. 3:3, 5; Acts 14:22; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5; 2 Th. 1:5; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 12:28; Jas. 2:5; 2 Pet.
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1:11)

10) The Messianic kingdom is Christ's rule over **everyone** and **everything** in heaven and on earth (Mt. 28:18)

- a) Angels, authorities, and powers (1 Pet. 3:22)
- b) Principalities and powers (Col. 2:9-10, 14-15)
- c) All rule, authority, power, dominion, every name (Eph. 1:20-21)
- d) All things to the church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18)
- e) All flesh (Jn. 17:1-2)
- f) All things (Jn. 13:3; 1 Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:22)
- g) Kings (1 Tim. 6:14-15; Rev. 1:5; 17:14; 19:15-16)
- h) Death and Hades (Rev. 1:18)

- c. **George E. Ladd:** "This definition preserves the most important values of the other interpretations. The Kingdom of God necessarily involves the church. The church is the people of the Kingdom, those who have accepted the redemptive rule of God. The rule of a King must have a people, and the church consists of those who have received the Kingdom of God (Mark 10:15), i.e., who have bowed before God's rule in Christ and have been brought thereby into that sphere of life over which Christ reigns. They have been delivered from the powers of darkness and transferred into the Kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13). They know the blessings of God's rule which are righteousness and peace and joy (Rom. 14:17). In addition, they are those destined to enter the Kingdom in its eschatological consummation.

"However, the church is not the Kingdom. The church is the people of God, while the Kingdom is primarily the rule of God, and only secondarily the blessings of his rule and the sphere in which these blessings are enjoyed. The church is the instrument or agency of the Kingdom." ("The Kingdom Of God And The Church," *Foundations: A Baptist Journal Of History And Theology*, April, 1961, 4:2:168)

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

- A. If it is true that the term "**kingdom**," as it is primarily used throughout the Bible, refers to the **power** of a king and not the **people** over whom he rules, I believe that this will have certain practical ramifications
- B. It may affect our understanding of the "**church**"
 - 1. The (universal) church is the great, **grand assembly** of God's people, nothing more, nothing less, nothing different
 - 2. It is not an **institution** or a **divine corporation** that dispenses God's grace, salvation, or the sacraments
 - a. Jesus did not die for and purchase an institution; He died and purchased His people
 - b. Jesus does not sanctify, love, and cleanse an institution; He sanctifies, loves, and cleanses His people
 - c. The church is not some **little red wagon** that Jesus is going to take to heaven that I must get in if I want to go
 - 1) This was my concept growing up
 - 2) Christians are not passengers in the wagon
 - 3) They are the nuts and bolts, the metal and paint of the wagon itself
 - d. The church is not some kind of **mediator** between God and man
 - 1) Christ is the only mediator (1 Tim. 2:5)

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- 2) The church does not **save**; it is the **saved**
 - a) A person does not have to be a member of the church to be saved; he has to be saved to be a member of the church (Acts 2:47)
 - b) It is misleading to say that **salvation is in the church**; it is much more accurate to say that **the church is the people who enjoy salvation** (Eph. 5:23)
 - e. *Note*: I suspect that equating the terms “kingdom” and “church” has significantly contributed to an **“institutional concept”** of the church
 3. It is not a **Church of churches**
 - a. The **“universal church”** is not made up of **“the congregations of the Church of Christ”**
 - b. The membership of the “universal church” is not the sum total of all the memberships of local churches
 - 1) Some local churches have members who are not true Christians (1 Jn. 2:19)
 - a) Some were never truly converted
 - b) Others have left the Lord (although they have not left the church)
 - 2) Some true Christians may not be members of a local church
 - a) The Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39)
 - b) Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:26)
 - c) The “excommunicated” (3 Jn. 9-10)
 - 3) Many true Christians may have absolutely no connection with the “Restoration Movement”
 - 4) Many true Christians may use various designations to refer to themselves
 - 5) Many true Christians have died and gone on to be with the Lord (Heb. 12:22-24)
 - c. This understanding may affect “our” attitude toward some **“denominational baptisms”**
 - 1) I believe that if someone has been baptized for the remission of sins, the Lord automatically adds that person to His church, even if he “joins” a denomination in the process
 - a) Now, denominationalism is wrong, and he needs to learn better and leave it, but I do not believe that this invalidates his baptism if it was for the remission of sins
 - 2) The objection that says **“He wasn’t baptized into the church”** reveals a misconception of Christ’s church as a “church of churches”
 4. It is not primarily **“the kingdom”**
 - a. The **kingdom** is **Christ’s rule** over everything and everyone on earth and in “the heavnlies”
 - b. The **church** is **the people** who voluntarily submit to that rule
 - C. It may change our interpretation of certain **Bible passages**
 1. Mt. 6:10: The phrase **“Thy will be done”** explains the significance of the phrase **“Thy kingdom come”**
 2. Mt. 16:18: Is Jesus saying that death would not keep Him from **establishing His church** or that death would not **overcome His people**?
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- a. *Note:* I think a reasonable case can be made that in this passage the term “kingdom” refers to either Christ’s **power** or Christ’s **people**
 - 3. Rom. 14:17: Is this passage really condemning church-sponsored recreation?
 - 4. 1 Cor. 15:24: What will Jesus deliver up to the Father? the church? or His power?
- D. It may change our **emphasis in evangelism**
- 1. It seems to me that brethren have given membership in the universal church an emphasis in their teaching that I do not find in the NT
 - a. Quite often, it seems, “we” want to talk about the church and explore that subject thoroughly, before we even discuss the plan of salvation
 - 2. In their preaching and teaching, the apostles did not preach “**the church**”; they preached “**Christ**”
 - a. By that I mean, there is no evidence in the recorded teaching of the book of Acts, that the apostles went around teaching that on the day of Pentecost, in Jerusalem, in AD 30, Jesus established the church, and if you want to go to heaven, you’ve got to be a member of the church
 - 1) There is no mention of **membership in the universal church** in any of the recorded sermons in the book of Acts
 - 2) In fact, there is very little mention of **the universal church** in the book of Acts (cf. Acts 2:47; 9:31)
 - a) In Acts 2:47, the word “church” is not found in some Greek MSS
 - b) In Acts 9:31, some Greek MSS use the singular “**church**” [ASV, NASB, NIV, RSV, NRSV] and others use the plural “**churches**” [KJV, NKJV]
 - 3) The only recorded teaching about the church in the book of Acts is Paul’s instructions to the Ephesian elders to “**shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood**” (Acts 20:28); but Paul was obviously talking about **the local church**, not the universal church
 - 4) In fact, there are relatively few references to **the universal church** in the entire NT. Of the **110** occurrences of the word “church(es),” no more than **21** refer to the universal church (Mt. 16:18; Acts 2:47; 9:31; 1 Cor. 10:32?; 12:28; 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Eph. 1:22-23; 3:10, 21; 5:23-27, 29, 32; Phil. 3:6; Col. 1:18, 24; 1 Tim. 3:15?; Heb. 12:22-24)
 - a) Note that all of the instruction about the “universal church” is given to **the people of God**, not alien sinners
 - 5) There are eight references to the “**kingdom**” in the book of Acts
 - a) Jesus spoke with the apostles about “**things pertaining to the kingdom of God**” (Acts 1:3)
 - b) The apostles asked Jesus if this was the time when He would **restore the kingdom to Israel** (Acts 1:6)
 - 1] How could that be a reference to the church, since the church was never possessed by Israel?
 - c) Philip preached “things concerning the **kingdom of God** and the **name of Jesus Christ**” (Acts 8:12)
 - 1] Note the juxtaposition of the terms “**kingdom**” and “**name**”
 - 2] Was Philip preaching about two different things or the same thing referred to in two different ways?
 - d) Paul told early disciples that they “**must through many tribulations**

enter the kingdom of God” (Acts 14:22)

- 1] This is obviously a reference to the **heavenly kingdom** (2 Tim. 4:18), not to what we commonly call the universal or the local church
- e) Paul preached “**the kingdom of God**” (Acts 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31)
 - 1] But are these passages talking about Christ’s **power** or His **people**, Christ’s **rule** or the **realm** over which He rules?
- b. Apostolic preaching emphasized **the rule and reign of Christ** (Acts 5:42; 8:5, 12, 35; 9:20, 22; 18:5, 28; 28:23, 30-31)
 - 1) “God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both **Lord** and **Christ**” (Acts 2:36)
 - 2) “For Moses truly said to the fathers, The **LORD** your God will raise up for you **a Prophet** like me from your brethren. **Him you shall hear in all things**, whatever He says to you. And it shall be *that* every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.” (Acts 3:22-23)
 - 3) “This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become **the chief cornerstone**” (Acts 4:11-12)
 - 4) “Him God has exalted to His right hand to be **Prince** and **Savior**....” (Acts 5:30-31)
 - 5) “Look! I see the heavens opened and **the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!**” (Acts 7:55-56)
 - 6) “He is **Lord** of all” (Acts 10:34-36)
 - 7) “It is He who was ordained by God to be **Judge** of the living and the dead” (Acts 10:42-43)
 - 8) “God raised up for Israel a **Savior** – Jesus” (Acts 13:23)
 - 9) “Through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins” (Acts 13:38-39)
 - 10) “Believe on the **Lord Jesus Christ**, and you will be saved, you and your household” (Acts 16:31)
 - 11) “This Jesus whom I preach to you is **the Christ**” (Acts 17:3)
 - 12) “He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained” (Acts 17:31)
- c. The apostles put the emphasis, in their preaching and teaching, on Christ, not on finding or joining or even being added to the church (cf. Acts 11:20-21, 23-24, 26)
- d. I fear that some, if not many, have unwittingly preached “**churchianity**” rather than “**Christianity**”
 - 1) I’m not saying that you can be a Christian without being a member of **Christ’s church**. If you are a faithful Christian, you will automatically be added by the Lord to His body (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13)
 - 2) I’m not saying that you can be a faithful Christian and ignore, neglect or disregard membership in a **local church** if such is possible
 - 3) I’m not saying that you can “**Preach the Man without the plan**”
 - 4) But I am saying that we can convert people to “**The Church of Christ**” rather than to **Jesus Christ**, and that’s a serious mistake
 - a) Note the emphasis in our speech on **the church** rather than **Christ**

- b) This puts the emphasis in the wrong place
- c) The **preeminence** belongs to **Christ**, not the **church** (Col. 1:18-20)

Conclusion:

- I. Dan. 7:13-14: ¹³“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. ¹⁴Then 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.
- II. May each of us, with our **lips** and our **lives**, proclaim Christ “**King of kings and Lord of lords**” (Rev. 19:16) and urge **every knee** to bow and **every tongue** to confess (Phil. 2:9-10)

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APPENDIX A

(Via H.H. Rowley, *Darius The Mede And The Four World Empires In The Book Of Daniel: A Historical Study of Contemporary*)

APPENDIX B

1. **Justin Martyr** [100-165]: “For when Daniel speaks of ‘one like unto the Son of man’ who received the everlasting kingdom, does he not hint at this very thing? For he declared that, in saying ‘like unto the Son of man,’ He appeared, and was man, but not of human seed. And the same thing he proclaimed in mystery when he speaks of this stone which was cut out without hands. For the expression ‘it was cut out without hands’ signified that it is not a work of man, but [a work] of the will of the Father and God of all things, who brought Him forth.” (*Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew* 76, ANF 1:236)
2. **Irenaeus**: “On this account also, Daniel, foreseeing His advent, said that a stone, cut out without hands, came into this world. For this is what ‘without hands’ means, that His coming into this world was not by the operation of human hands, that is, of those men who are accustomed to stone-cutting; that is, Joseph taking no part with regard to it, but Mary alone co-operating with the pre-arranged plan. For this stone from the earth derives existence from both the power and the wisdom of God. So, then, we understand that His advent in human nature was not by the will of God.” (*Against Heresies* 21.7, ANF 1:453)
3. **Jerome**: “...at the final period of all these empires of gold and silver and bronze and iron, a rock (namely, the Lord and Savior) was cut off without hands, that is, without copulation of human seed and by birth from a virgin’s womb; and after all the empires had been crushed, He became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.” (Jerome, 32)
4. **Theodoret**: “Therefore we are taught both by the Old and the New Testament that our Lord Jesus Christ has been designated the stone. For He was cut out of the mountain without hands, being born of a virgin apart from any nuptial intercourse, and the divine scripture had always been accustomed to name him as having had his origin contrary to nature, the cutting out of a stone.” (*Commentary on the Visions of the Prophet Daniel* 2.34, 35, PG 81:1301)
5. **Irenaeus**: “Christ is the stone which is cut out without hands, who shall destroy temporal kingdoms, and introduce an eternal one, which is the resurrection of the just.” (???)
6. **Augustine**: “The prophet wishes that by the mountain should be understood the Jewish kingdom. But the kingdom of the Jews had not filled the whole face of the earth. The stone was cut out from thence, because from thence was the Lord born on His advent among men. And wherefore without hands? Because without the cooperation of man did the Virgin bear Christ.” (*Tractate 4 on the Gospel of John* 4.4, NPNF, 1st series, 7:26)

APPENDIX C

- I. Hebrew: *malkuw*
- A. **Gesenius**: "...kingdom, and royal dignity...; and, the dominion of a king...." (#4437, 478)
- B. **BDB**: "**royalty, reign, kingdom**.... 1. *royalty, kingship, kingly authority*.... 2. organized (world-) kingdom.... 3. *realm* (territorial).... 4. *reign, time of reigning*...." (#4437, 1100)
- C. **Harris, Archer, & Waltke**: "**royalty, reign, kingdom**. See Hebrew *malkut*." (#2829c, 2:1041)
- II. Hebrew: *malkuwth*
- A. **Gesenius**: "fem. ... --(1) *kingdom, royal dominion*, a word of the later Hebrew for the older.... Meton. used of *royal ornaments*.... (2) *a kingdom*, i.e. a country and people subject to a king...." (#4438, 478)
- B. **BDB**: "**royalty, royal power, reign, kingdom** (chiefly late).... 1. *royal power, dominion*.... 2. *reign*.... 3. *kingdom, realm*...." (#4438, 574-575)
- C. **Harris, Archer, & Waltke**: "**sovereign power**." (#1199e, 1:507)
- III. Greek: *basileia*
- A. **BAGD**: "1. *kingship, royal power, royal rule, kingdom*....**labein eauto basileian** obtain royal power (for oneself) Lk 19:12, 15....*royal rule* Lk 1:33; 22:29; 23:42.... 2. *kingdom*, i.e., the territory ruled over by a king.... 3. esp. *the royal reign or kingdom of God*, a chiefly eschatological concept, beginning to appear in the prophets, elaborated in apocalyptic passages...." (134-135)
- B. **Thayer**: "1. *royal power, kingship, dominion, rule*....of the royal power of Jesus as the triumphant Messiah....of the royal power and dignity conferred on Christians in the Messiah's kingdom....the royal power and dignity belonging to God.... 2. *a kingdom* i.e. the territory subject to the rule of a king.... 3. Frequent in the N.T. in reference to the Reign of the Messiah are the following phrases....prop. *the kingdom over which God rules*....*the kingdom of the Messiah*, which will be founded by God through the Messiah and over which the Messiah will preside as God's vicegerent....*the kingdom of heaven*, i.e. the kingdom which is of heavenly or divine origin and nature (in rabbin. writ....is *the rule of God, the theocracy* viewed universally, not the Messianic kingdom)....But Jesus employed the phrase *kingdom of God* or *the kingdom of heaven* to indicate *that perfect order of things which he was about to establish, in which all those of every nation who should believe in him were to be gathered together into one society, dedicated and intimately united to God, and made partakers of eternal salvation*. This kingdom is spoken of as now begun and actually present, inasmuch as its foundations have already been laid by Christ and its benefits realized among men that believe in him....But far more frequently the kingdom of heaven is spoken of as a future blessing, since its consummate establishment is to be looked for on Christ's solemn return from the skies, the dead being called to life again, the ills and wrongs which burden the present state of things being done away, the powers hostile to God being vanquished....By a singular use...*God's heavenly kingdom*, in 2 Tim. iv. 18, denotes the exalted and perfect order of things which already exists in heaven, and into which true Christians are ushered immediately after death....The phrase **bas. ton ouranon** or **ton theon**, while retaining its meaning *kingdom of heaven* or *of God*, must be understood, according to the requirements of the context, a. of the beginning, growth, potency, of the divine kingdom: Mt. xiii. 31-33; Mk. iv. 30; Lk. xiii. 18. b. of its fortunes: Mt. xiii. 24; Mk. iv. 26. c. of the conditions to be complied with in order to reception among its citizens: Mt. xviii. 23; xx. 1; xxii. 2; xxv. 1. d. of its blessings and benefits, whether present or future: Mt. xiii. 44 sq.; Lk. vi. 20.... e. of the congregation of those who constitute the royal 'city of God'...Rev. i. 6....(In the O.T. Apocr. **e bas. ton theon** denotes *God's rule, the divine administration*.... *the universe subject to God's sway, God's royal domain*....*the O.T. theocratic commonwealth*....)" (#932, 96-98)
- C. **Vine**: "is primarily an abstract noun, denoting sovereignty, royal power, dominion, e.g., Rev. 17:18, translated '(which) reigneth,' lit., 'hath a kingdom' (R.V. marg.); then, by

metonymy, a concrete noun, denoting the territory or people over whom a king rules, e.g. Matt. 4:8; Mark 3:24. It is used especially of the Kingdom of God and of Christ.

“The Kingdom of God is (a) the sphere of God’s rule, Ps. 22:28; 145:13; Dan. 4:25; Luke 1:52; Rom. 13:1, 2. Since, however, this earth is the scene of universal rebellion against God, e.g., Luke 4:5, 6; 1 John 5:19; Rev. 11:15-18, the Kingdom of God is (b) the sphere in which, at any given time, His rule is acknowledged....

“The fundamental principle of the Kingdom is declared in the words of the Lord spoken in the midst of a company of Pharisees, ‘the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you,’ Luke 17:21, marg., that is, where the King is, there is the Kingdom. Thus at the present time and so far as this earth is concerned, where the King is and where His rule is acknowledged, is, first, in the heart of the individual believer, Acts 4:19; Eph. 3:17; 1 Pet. 3:15; and then in the churches of God, 1 Cor. 12:3, 5, 11; 14:37; cp. Col. 1:27, where for ‘in’ read ‘among.’” (624)

APPENDIX D

1. **C.H. Dodd:** “The term ‘kingdom’ is in English somewhat ambiguous, but it naturally suggests a territory or community governed by a king. The Greek term **baseleia** which it translates is also ambiguous. But there can be no doubt that the expression before us represents an Aramaic phrase well established in Jewish usage, ‘the **malkuth** of Heaven.’ **Malkuth**, like other substantives of the same formation, is properly an abstract noun, meaning ‘kingship,’ ‘kingly rule,’ ‘reign’ or ‘sovereignty.’ The expression ‘the **malkuth** of God’ connotes the fact that God reigns as King.” (*Parables Of The Kingdom*, 21, quoted in Jim McGuiggan, *The Reign Of God*, 19-20)
2. **H. L. Ellison:** “Kingdom...is primarily ‘sovereignty’, kingly rule and power. It is something which has always existed, but in its fulness it is yet future. It entered the world in a new way with the coming of the King (Mk 1:15)....
“There are a few passages where it is used more in our sense of the sphere in which God’s sovereignty is exercised. Even here, however, the stress on God’s sovereignty is normally prominent.” (*The New Layman’s Bible Commentary*, 1189)
3. **Warren Wiersbe:** “In the New Testament, the word *kingdom* means ‘rule, reign, authority’ rather than a place or a specific realm. The phrase ‘kingdom of heaven’ refers to the rule of God. The Jewish leaders wanted a political leader who would deliver them from Rome; but Jesus came to bring *spiritual* rule to the hearts of people.” (*The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Vol. 1, 20)
4. **William Hendriksen:** “In its broadest connotation the terms ‘*the kingdom of heaven,*’ ‘*the kingdom of God,*’ or simply ‘*the kingdom*’...*indicate God’s kingship, rule or sovereignty*, recognized in the hearts and operative in the lives of his people, and effecting their *complete salvation*, their constitution as a *church*, and finally a *redeemed universe*.” (*Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark*, 56)
5. **E. Graham Swift:** “*The kingdom of God* is the rule of God in the hearts of men and in society; clearly it is intimately connected with the actual Person and presence of Jesus; He is Himself the kingdom, so that we are able to say that it has both come and is still to come, since Jesus has already come and yet is to come again.” (*The New Bible Commentary: Revised*, 855)
6. **Avery S. J. Dulles:** “The term *basileia* in the Greek New Testament frequently means kingship (reign) but it sometimes must be translated as kingdom (realm). The two concepts are inseparable. Christ’s kingship or lordship implies a community over which he reigns – in other words, a kingdom. Conversely, the concept of the kingdom always implies a king.” (“The Church And The Kingdom,” *A Church For All Peoples*, 14)

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McGuiggan, Jim. *The Kingdom Of God And The Planet Earth*. Lubbock, TX: Montex Publishing Co, 1978.

This book is a clear and concise refutation of Dispensational Premillennialism. It also contains two chapters with helpful information on the kingdom of God. I highly recommend it.

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Gurney argues that the Messianic kingdom was established in the first century, but he curiously argues that the fourth kingdom prophesied by Daniel is Greece, rather than Rome. He argues: "The vision of the image indicates that the setting up of the heavenly kingdom *began* with the destruction of the fourth kingdom – the stone struck the feet of iron and clay *before* it became a mountain and filled the earth. The vision of the four beasts indicates that the fourth kingdom was destroyed before the 'one like a son of man' received the kingdom." (40) The old adage that says "Don't overlook the obvious" would seem to be good advice for Mr. Gurney.

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