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GOD PROMISES A KINGDOM

by Harold Turner

In the second year after Israel was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, which when interpreted, would tell of a great event in God's plan for his people. In time Daniel was called to make known both the dream and its interpretation. Daniel said that the king had seen a great image standing before him. The image had a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, and his feet and legs were of iron and clay. Daniel told the king that these different materials in the image represented four great kingdoms that would bear rule over all the earth.

Daniel also told the king, "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." (Daniel 2:34-35)

Daniel then began to interpret the dream to Nebuchadnezzar. "Thou, O king art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power and strength, and glory . . . Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise . . . And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." (Daniel 2:37-43)

Briefly stated, the image pictured four great world powers, beginning with Babylon. Babylon was the head of gold, which reigned from about 605 B.C. to about

539 B.C. According to Daniel 5:25-28, and also to history, the Medes and Persians defeated Babylon, and became the second world kingdom, the breast and arms of silver. The Medio-Persian kingdom ruled from about 539 B.C. to about 331 B.C. Then in Daniel 8 we learn that the Greeks defeated the Medio-Persian kingdom, and became the third world power, represented by the belly and thighs of brass. The Greeks reigned as a world power until about 63 B.C. The fourth nation to rise to a world power following Babylon was Rome. Rome is represented by the legs and feet of iron and clay.

What is the significance of Nebuchadnezzar's dream? In Daniel 2:44-45, Daniel shows the real purpose of this. "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. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

The significance of this dream was to show the period of time that God would set up his kingdom. Sometime within the days of the fourth kingdom God would set up his kingdom. This is evident by the fact that the stone cut out of the mountain, which represents God's kingdom, would smite the image on the feet, which represents Rome.

When was God going to set up this kingdom? There are many different opinions about this. Some believe that the kingdom was set up in 1914, and others believe that the kingdom is yet to be set up. However, according to Daniel, the kingdom was to be set up during the days of the Roman kingdom. Since Rome has fallen over 1500 year ago, how could the kingdom be set up at a later time? Re-

member, Daniel said the stone, which represents the kingdom of God, would smite the image of the feet, which represents Rome. How could the stone smite an image that hasn't existed for over 1500 years? Any view that places the establishment of the kingdom of God later than the days of the Roman Empire does not harmonize with the prophecy of Daniel.

Continued on page 4.

HELP!!!!

Let us hear from you!!! In the last two issues of this paper, we have attempted to inform you of the status of this publication. As you can imagine, the cost to print and mail this paper have gone up considerably. Our postage rates have more than doubled in recent months; we are mailing more copies now than ever before; and yet, our contributions from our readers have increased very little. The point is this—in order to continue this paper, we need some financial assistance. One-time contributions are appreciated, but what is really needed is contributions on a regular monthly basis. If your congregation helps already, but could increase their contribution, we may be able to continue. Many have written and expressed their appreciation for the paper, and for this we are truly grateful. It helps to receive a kind word of appreciation from time to time. If you would like to see the paper continue, please write to us and let us know. Especially, if you can help contribute to its publication, may we encourage you to do so. Just write to:

FULTON COUNTY

GOSPEL NEWS

P. O. Box 251

Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554

"LOVEST THOU ME"

By Dan Wilson

September thirteenth was a very special day to me. On that day my older brother turned twenty-two years old. When you are away from a person, days like birthdays are even more special. Randy is in the Marine Corp, in fact two of my brothers are in the Marines, but Randy I haven't seen in about twenty months.

I'm like most people who have brothers and sisters, when we were younger we would fight occasionally, yet I love my brothers and sister dearly. While Randy has been gone, I have missed him. I missed my girlfriend and her family when they were on vacation last month because I love each of them. When I go to church somewhere else besides at Bolivar, I miss it for the same reason, I love each person there. Since this article came about because of my brother's birthday, I would like you to do me a favor as you read this. Think about a time in your life when someone you loved left you or you left them.

Okay? We worry about them, don't we? We pray and hope that nothing bad will happen to them. Even if we have no reason at all to believe that anything will happen. After all, if we knew something was going to happen, we wouldn't let someone we love leave, right? Of course not!

I think we would all agree that God the Father loved His Son Jesus Christ. The statement in Matthew 3:17, "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," verifies God's love for Christ. Yet God sent His Son down to this earth, to die for our sins. Imagine sending someone you love somewhere, knowing that they would die! Think about the pain and hurt you yourself would feel in that situation. I would say that God felt pain and hurt for His "beloved Son." Why would God allow this to happen to His Son?

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) Could

you "trade-off" one loved one for another? I think it would have to be an unusual situation before we would do this. Paul wrote in Romans 5:7, 8 that "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." God allowed His Son to die for us while we were still sinners alien to God! Can't we realize the great love God has for us that He sent His Son for us? Can't we perceive this? That is how John puts it in I John 3:16-18, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." If we perceive, if we realize the love of God thru Christ dying for us, then we should be willing to help our brothers in need because we love them! If I say that I love my brother, yet I'm not willing to help him when he needs me, am I really doing what God and Christ would want?

We are commanded and encouraged to love one another! "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen; And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." (I John 4:16-21)

Jesus told us of His love for us and why we should love each other. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love: even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John 15:9-14) Christ showed His love for us in that He did lay down His life for us, if we will be His friends and obey His commandments.

Paul knew the love of Christ and the fact that we must show our love for Him. As he wrote to the Romans in Romans 8:31-39, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against

us? He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is it that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." What wonderful thing to realize that none of these things can separate us from God's love! But there is one thing that can and that is us ourselves! We can separate ourselves from God's love by not obeying His commandments and being in Christ!

Even as much as I love my brothers and sister, even as much as you love that person you have been thinking of, we must love Christ more! As Jesus said in Matthew 10:37-40, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. He that receiveth you receiveth me, and He that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." We must realize the great love that God had for us that He sent His Son, we must realize the great love that Christ had for us that He was willing to die for our sins, we must love Christ and each other, and obey His commands as He tells us what He wants us to do. Just as He told Peter in John 21:15-17, "So when they had dined, Jesus saith unto Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things: thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep."

"Lovest thou me?" This is the question that Jesus asks each of us today. If you do, won't you obey him! After all He loved you enough to die for us, do you love him enough to obey Him?

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

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EDITOR Mike Pace

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The following is an article submitted by one of our readers from St. Clair, Missouri. I hope you'll read it carefully as it speaks of the gratitude a child of God should possess. MP

THANKFUL

*Do we go through life fancy free;
Knowing not what strife can be;
Do we have a home and plenty to eat;
Clothes to wear and shoes on our feet;
Are we thankful each day;
Do we thank God when we pray.*

*Do our children have schools to attend;
Know someone who's a special friend;
Have jobs to supply our needs;
Gardens we've grown from seeds;
Are we thankful each day;
Do we thank God when we pray.*

*Do we have beds in which to rest;
So we can do our very best;
Have familys that are loving and caring;
Sorrow and happiness both sharing;
Are we thankful each day;
Do we thank God when we pray.*

*Do we have a car in which to ride;
And maybe a truck on the side;
A T.V. or radio which works good;
To hear about things in our neighborhood;
Are we thankful each day;
Do we thank God when we pray.*

*Do we have children happy and bright;
To kiss and tuck in bed every night;
A husband to share our trouble and cares;
Our rainy days and our sunny days to share;
Are we thankful each day;
Do we thank God when we pray.*

*Many do not go through life fancy free;
Knowing quite well what strife can be;
Not having a home or plenty to eat;
Having few clothes no shoes on their feet:*

*Many have no schools to attend;
Know not the love of a special friend;
Some have no jobs to supply their needs;
No gardens and no seeds.*

*Many have no beds in which to rest;
So they cannot be at their very best;
Some have no cars in which to ride;
Much less a truck on the side:*

*Many have children that are bright;
They put to bed hungry every night;
Do these people know despite their despair;
God will help them He's always there:*

*Have we taught them to be thankful each day;
Have we taught them how to pray.*

By Glenda Smith

WHEN WE ALL GET TO HEAVEN

By Dennis R. Smith

For years now men and women across the land have enjoyed the beautiful hymn, "When We All Get to Heaven." While this is a grand old song and while it does suggest a day of rejoicing, as well as mansions bright and beautiful, it also holds another lesson that has probably been overlooked. That lesson is this: **NOT ALL OF US WILL GET TO HEAVEN!** How sad this thought is! How tragic it is! I say this because many never give it any thought; while others, in their hopes of getting there, will be sadly fooled. Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven." (Matt. 7:21.) So fixed are some on getting to heaven that they will "cast out devils in the name of Jesus and yet, the Son of God himself rebuked such by saying, "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:23.)

It has been said by some, "you folks in the church of Christ think you're the only ones going to heaven." This is an awful statement for anyone to make since immediately it puts them in the position of the almighty judge and violates the scripture of Matt. 7:1. You will notice, in the introductory paragraph, I have stated: "NOT ALL OF US WILL GET TO HEAVEN!" This is just as true concerning the church of Christ as any other religious body. When we violate the scriptures and allow our lives to be lived without seeking repentance from that violation we will, like all others, be condemned to "everlasting torment." Here is a fact that we all need to pay attention to. A violation of God's commands, will surely bring his wrath down on us. The scriptures teach that all humanity will be "judged by the words of the Bible" (John 12:48, Rev. 20:12). They also teach that SIN is the transgression of the law of God (I John 3:4). Since this is true it is **IMPERATIVE THAT WE STUDY OUR BIBLE IN ORDER TO KNOW WHAT HIS LAW (word) READS!** In view of the scriptures, I would hate to stand before the judgment bar of God and fail to have scriptural proof of my salvation. Peter declared: "Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a REASON of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." (I Peter 3:15). And so in harmony with the advice of Peter, I submit God's word as evidence of my salvation.

FAITH: "Without faith it is impossible to please him." (Heb. 11:6) "He that believeth . . . shall be saved." (Mark 16:

16). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." (Acts 16:31)

REPENTANCE: "Repent . . . and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38). "Repent that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts 3:19). ". . . except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:3, 5).

CONFESSION OF CHRIST: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 10:32). "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:9-10.)

OBEDIENCE: "He that believeth AND IS BAPTIZED shall be saved." (Mark 16:16). "And they took him the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." (Acts 16:33). "Repent, and be **baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the **remission** of your sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:38).

In keeping with the promise of the scriptures, when the above commandments are met, this entitles one to become a Christian. This makes him a child of God (Gal. 3:26-27). This makes him a new creature in Christ Jesus (II Cor. 5:17). This adds him to the church (Acts 2:47). This is the "born again" experience of John 3:3, 5 as coupled together with I Peter 1:23.

Surely there could be no greater comfort than knowing you have absolute scriptural authority for your salvation, especially since it will determine "IF WE ALL GET TO HEAVEN".

I have touched on some of the things that we must obey in order to get to heaven. Space does not afford the opportunity to write all of them. However, it would be worthy of our time to pay attention to the scriptural examples of worship, manner of giving, and wearing of certain names and titles, the name of Christ's church, the organization of Christ's church and other important things that are expressly taught in the New Testament. Then, if "even an angel preach any other gospel to you" (Gal. 1:8), you may still retain the assurance of your salvation and be able to speak with confidence, "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I've committed unto him against that day" (II Tim. 1:12). This is the promise of God to us through the scriptures.

GOD PROMISES A KINGDOM

Continued from page 1

When was the kingdom of God to be set up? According to Mark 9:1, Jesus said, "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." Are there any of those people to whom Jesus was speaking that have never tasted death? Jesus said that they would not taste of death until they saw the kingdom of God come with power. Therefore, the kingdom had to be established within the lifetime of those present at that time. Sometime within thirty years after this promise the apostle Paul write that God "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." (Col. 1:13) How could one enter into something that did not exist? When God saves us from sin (the power of darkness) he translates us into the kingdom. Therefore, the kingdom had to have been in existence at that time.

When did Christ actually begin to reign as the king over God's kingdom? In Acts 2:29-31, the apostle Peter shows that the prophecy of David concerning one to sit upon his throne was fulfilled in Christ following his resurrection. He said, "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 . . ." What did God swear in an oath to David? That he would raise up one to sit on his throne. Who was this? Evidently it was Christ. When would he raise him up to sit on this throne? Peter states that this would take place when God raised up Christ from the dead.

Daniel also made a statement that is in harmony with what Peter stated in Acts 2:29-31. In Daniel 7:13-14, he said, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Jesus spoke of himself as the "Son of man" (Matt. 16:13), he ascended with the clouds of heaven (Acts 1:9), he ascended into heaven to the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19), at this time he was given dominion (Ephesians 1:19-23), glory (Acts 3:13), and a kingdom (John 18:36-37; Colossians 1:13). After the

HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

The most important question ever asked is: "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30.) Then, the **HOW** becomes equally as important. Notice the step by step process. First, we must have faith in the Author and Finisher of our faith, Jesus Christ. (Heb. 12:2.) This faith comes by the hearing of the word of God. (Rom. 10:17.) "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6.) With the belief and trust that Jesus is the Redeemer, we must repent of sins. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent." (Acts 17:30.) In repentance, we come out of our sinful condition, **STOP** serving Satan and **START** serving the Lord.

(Matt. 3:8; Luke 13:3.) With this new attitude we are ready to confess our faith, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:9-10.) Read Matthew 10:32-33. Acknowledging our faith, repentance and confession, the last step into Christ is baptism. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (Gal. 3:27.) Read Mark 16: 16; Acts 2:38. Now that our past sins have been forgiven, the Lord has added us to His church and we are Christians. (Acts 2:47; Acts 11:26.)

BECOME A CHRISTIAN

event of Christ's ascension back to the right hand of God, where he was seated on the throne, the apostles preached that Jesus was both "Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Jesus began reigning as the king of God's kingdom at this time.

What is the kingdom over which Christ reigns? That which was established as a result of the preaching in Acts 2, was the church. Jesus uses the term church and kingdom interchangeably in Matt. 16:18-19. When God delivers us from the power of darkness he translates us into the kingdom. Col. 1:13, and when God saves us from sin he adds us to the church (Acts 2:47). The teachings of Jesus regarding the kingdom are clearly applicable to the church. Therefore, the kingdom over which Christ now reigns is the church. There is no scriptural distinction between

the kingdom of God and the Church.

Jesus did not promise to return the second time to establish a kingdom. But, rather to deliver the kingdom back to the Father (I Cor. 15:24). Only those within the church-kingdom will be delivered by Jesus to the Father. Those outside the church-kingdom will be eternally lost. Are you a member of the kingdom of God? The same thing that makes us a member of Christ's church will also make us a member of the kingdom of God. Acts 2:37-47 clearly shows us how to become a citizen in God's kingdom, the church.

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