

**"The Earthly Kingdom of Jesus Christ"**

**Part 28**

**Matthew 18:13-18**

**Introduction:** Last week in our study of the Kingdom we finished a very important study in the Matthew 13 parables. These parables tell us what to expect in this age in which we live while the Kingdom is in a state of postponement. Tonight, as we continue in this study, we are going to look at what God is doing in this interim age in which we live. As we continue our journey, we are going to look at a few studies concerning the church. There are many teachings concerning the church that are not accurate. Therefore, we shall consider a few questions.

1. **Is the Church the Kingdom?**
2. **When did the Church begin?**
3. **What is the purpose of the Church?**
4. **Did the Church replace Israel?**

Let us now consider the first question.

➤ **Is the Church the Kingdom?**

There are many churches that believe and teach that the church is the Kingdom now. They will teach that Jesus is seated on the throne in the believer's heart and many of the blessings of the Kingdom are experienced in a spiritual sense in the life of the believer. There are those who say we are building the Kingdom right now as members of the body of Jesus Christ. Are these teachings true? The answer is "NO!" The church is not the Kingdom and we are not building the Kingdom today. That is not the purpose of the church as we shall see later in this study. Let us see why the church is not the Kingdom and as we do, I will borrow from Woods as well as others from their teaching on the Kingdom.

**1. Jesus is not the King of the church.**

Nowhere in the Bible do we read that Jesus is the King of the church. There are several metaphors which describe the relationship between Jesus and His Church but King and Kingdom is not one of them.

❖ **Head and the Body**

**Ephesians 1:20-23**

<sup>20</sup> Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

<sup>21</sup> Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

<sup>22</sup> And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

<sup>23</sup> Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

#### **Ephesians 4:15**

<sup>15</sup> But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

#### **Ephesians 5:23**

<sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

Here in these verses, we see that Jesus is the Head and the Church is the body.

#### ❖ Vine and Branches

#### **John 15:1-5**

*I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.*

<sup>2</sup> Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

<sup>3</sup> Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

<sup>4</sup> Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

<sup>5</sup> I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

#### ❖ Groom and Bride

#### **Ephesians 5:23-25**

<sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

<sup>24</sup> Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

### Revelation 21:9

<sup>9</sup> And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

#### ❖ Foundation and Stones/Cornerstone and Building

### 1 Corinthians 3:11

<sup>11</sup> For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

### 1 Peter 2:5-6

<sup>5</sup> Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

<sup>6</sup> Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

All of these metaphors pertain to Jesus and the Church but there is none that picture Him as the King and the Church as the Kingdom.

### 2. The Church is never called the Kingdom.

The Church is a called-out assembly that is referred to in several ways. The Church is called the body, the branches, the bride, the wife, the building/house, the stones, but the Church is never called the Kingdom anywhere in the Bible.

### 3. The Church does not portray how the Kingdom is described in the Old Testament.

### Psalm 2:6-9

<sup>6</sup> Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

<sup>7</sup> I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.

<sup>8</sup> Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.

<sup>9</sup> Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

**Revelation 19:14-15**

<sup>14</sup> And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

<sup>15</sup> And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

In both passages we see that Jesus Christ will rule His Kingdom with a rod of iron. This will bring about rapid justice against sin.

**Zechariah 14:16-18**

<sup>16</sup> And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.

<sup>17</sup> And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain.

<sup>18</sup> And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles.

This is how sin will be dealt with in the Kingdom. But in the Church age this is not what we see. The Church is marked with carnality and in many cases a low standard of a Christian lifestyle.

**1 Corinthians 3:1-3**

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.

<sup>2</sup> I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.

<sup>3</sup> For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

### 1 Timothy 4:1-2

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

<sup>2</sup> Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

### 2 Timothy 3:1-7

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

<sup>2</sup> For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

<sup>3</sup> Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

<sup>4</sup> Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

<sup>5</sup> Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

<sup>6</sup> For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

<sup>7</sup> Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

These two passages from 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy are not a description of what unbelievers will be like in the last days. Unbelievers have always been like this. This is a description of what is going to happen in the Church in the last days. Let us be reminded of what we looked at in Matthew 13 concerning the decline in dedicated disciples.

### Matthew 13:23

<sup>23</sup> But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Notice the words of **Walvoord**:

*"The Christian era has been no golden age of righteousness nor has the church conquered the world. It is more accurate to recognize that the world has to a large degree possessed the church."*

**Ice** adds more to this thought:

*"Apostasy and its evil effects provide the main message of such books as Galatians, 2 Thessalonians, Hebrews, and Revelation."*

All of this makes it very clear that the characteristics of the Kingdom are not found in the Church and therefore the Church is not the Kingdom. Let me show you one more text to support this.

**Acts 20:17, 29-30**

*<sup>17</sup> And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.*

*<sup>29</sup> For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.*

*<sup>30</sup> Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

#### **4. The Church is an heir of the Kingdom.**

**James 2:5**

*<sup>5</sup> Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*

Notice the words of **Peters**:

*"If the church is the Kingdom, and believers are now in it, why designate them "heirs" of a Kingdom?"*

**Conclusion:**

When we search through the Scriptures it is absolutely impossible that the Church can be the Kingdom as many teach. There are many other points we could look at to support this but what we have here is a solid foundation upon which we can clearly see that we are not in the Kingdom.

When the Kingdom comes it comes suddenly and violently not gradually as the Church grows over time.