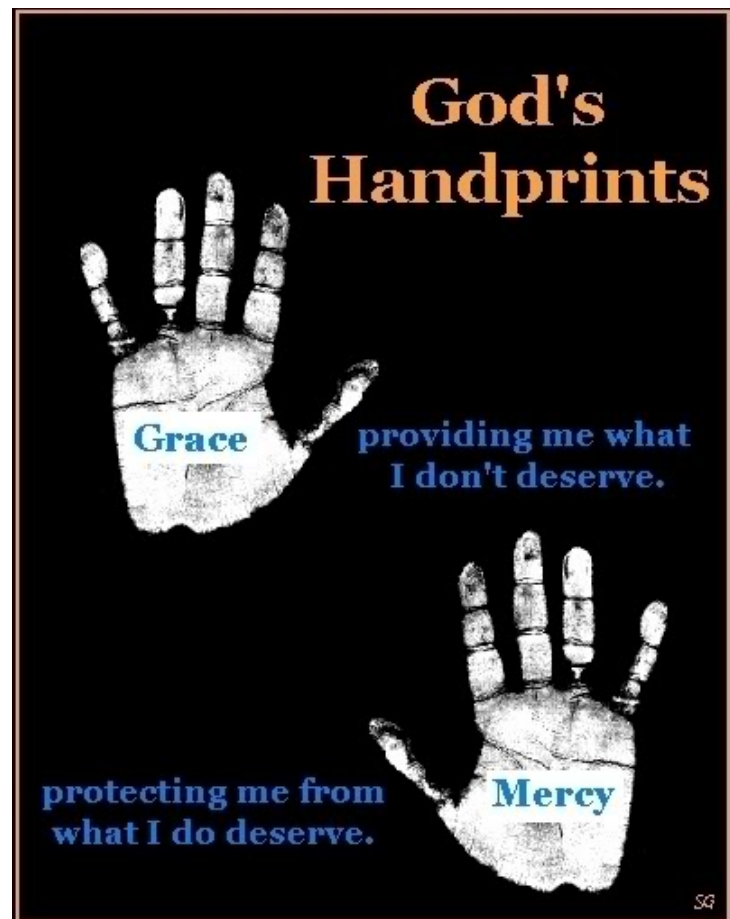




The Kingdom of God

Edition 4, November 25 - 2011

But **Lord**,
you remain
the same
forever!
Your **throne**
continues from
generation to
generation.
Restore us, O
Lord, and bring
us back to
You
again! Give us
back the
joys we
once had!



Alive Ministries South Africa

www.aliveministries-sa.org

Dear friends,

This is all about The Kingdom on planet earth. Religion prepares man to leave earth; the Kingdom empowers man to dominate earth. Religion focuses on Heaven; the Kingdom focuses on earth. Religion wants to escape earth; the Kingdom impacts, influences and changes earth. Religion seeks to take earth to Heaven; the Kingdom seeks to bring Heaven to earth. The secret to a full and fulfilled life is discovery, understanding, and application of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Religion postpones the Kingdom to a future experience. But you must remember that you cannot appropriate what you postpone. God's desire for you is that you enter the Kingdom life *now* and experience, explore, apply, practice, and enjoy living with the benefits, promises, and privileges of Heaven on earth. Let the adventure begin! (Myles Munroe). The answer for the humans: **Heaven on earth!**

Read it with the help of the Holy Spirit, don't approach it with religious or denominational filters and enjoy it! Moreover never let this study be an opportunity to get divided among each other. Confess to each other: Jesus Christ is the only way to our salvation, He will return and be aware: *But while knowledge makes us feel important, it is love that really builds up the church.*² *Anyone who claims to know all the answers doesn't really know very much.*³ *But the person who loves God is the one whom God knows and cares for (1 Corinthians 8:1-3).*

The mission of our Lord is to unite heaven and earth again, in bringing the Kingdom of God. The goal is to make everything that belongs to the heavenly kingdom to be established in the natural world (Ephesians 1:9-10).

Jesus said "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent (Luke 4:43). You say rightly that I am a King. For this cause I was born (John 18:37).

1. Know your background, the Garden of Eden.

God, Who is Spirit, created people in His own image to reign as spiritual beings with Him. Then God said, "Let Us make man **in Our image**, according to Our likeness; let them have **dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."²⁷ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; **male and female** He created them (Genesis 1:26-27).⁵ For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have **crowned him with glory and honor.**⁶ You have **made him to have dominion** over the works of Your hands; You have put **all things under his feet,**⁷ All sheep and oxen—Even the beasts of the field,⁸ The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas.⁹ O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is **Your name** in all the earth! (Psalm 8:5-9).

- **We R spiritual:** God, Who is Spirit, designed the spirit of human beings (in His image) as an instrument to receive His instructions. It's through our spirit that we have **communion** and **fellowship with God**. We are Spirit, we have a Soul and we live in a body. See more information in our study "We R spiritual";
- **We are made to have dominion:** The word "*dominion*" here translates the Hebrew word *mamlakah*, which can be translated as "Kingdom", "sovereign rule", or "Royal power";
- **We are crowned with glory** to give Him glory and to manifest His glory through us on earth;
- **Male and female are equivalent;**
- The Garden of Eden (Genesis 2): God planted it, He placed there the man He created, beautiful trees, delicious fruit, rivers watering the land, exceptionally pure gold, beautiful stones, the Lord created animals for the human as a companion who will help him, the Lord created the women. **The Garden of Eden, a heavenly place on earth.**

The Garden of Eden, a heavenly place on earth with one to one communion and fellowship with God. Mankind was created (male and female equivalent) to have rulership over the earth. Heaven and earth is united (one), its Heaven on earth. And don't forget: It's all about His excellent name!

2. What happened?

Therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken (Genesis 3:23). The well known fall due to our sin. The humans placed out of the Garden of Eden (heavenly places, the Kingdom) *to till the ground from which he was taken.* As a consequence we lost all the benefits of the Garden of Eden:

- Our spiritual centre, has been transferred (degraded) from our spirit to our soul. We lost the one to one communion and fellowship with God (see "We R spiritual");
- We lost our dominion, our Kingdom or Royal power. Satan became our new master;
- We lost the glory of God which was upon us;
- The equivalence between male and female disappeared;
- We lost all the other benefits of the Garden of Eden (beautiful trees, delicious fruit, rivers watering the land, exceptionally pure gold, beautiful stones, etc.);
- Heaven (the Kingdom) and earth were separated.

Due to the banishing out of the Garden of Eden, **many curses came upon the earth and mankind.**

3. What were God's interventions?

God, Who is love, immediately took actions to restore the damaged situation. And be aware, it is a step by step approach, it is a growing process into maturity until the last day, The visible Kingdom in its full glory, again:

- **The curse upon our opponent Satan:** ¹⁴ *So the LORD God said to the serpent: " Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life (Genesis 3:14).* The result in this world from Genesis 3 till today: Satan became a "vacuum cleaner". In Dutch we say Satan became a "stofzuigslang" which means the Dutch word for hose is snake, so Satan the snake became a vacuum cleaner who have to eat the dust.
- **Enmity between Satan and the woman:** *And I will cause hostility between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel." (Genesis 3:15).* "You will strike his heel" refers to Satan's repeated attempts to defeat Christ during His life on earth. "He will crush your head" foreshadows Satan's defeat when Christ rose from the dead. A strike on the heel is not deadly, but a crushing blow to the head is. This is also the **announcement of the spiritual Kingdom** Jesus would bring with His first coming.
- To purify the earth from sin God caused the flood which covers the earth. And have a look at God's promises to Noah after the flood: ¹ *Then God blessed Noah and his sons and told them, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth.* ² *All the animals of the earth, all the birds of the sky, all the small animals that scurry along the ground, and all the fish in the sea will look on you with fear and terror. I have placed them in your power (Genesis 9:1-2).* Yes, we are back in Genesis 1:26-27: *...They will be masters over all life - the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals and small animals. The humans, after the flood are reigning again over all the animals as it was mend to be!*
- ⁵ *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.* ⁶ *And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'* These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." (Exodus 19:5-6). Here we see God's intent for the nation to be governed by heaven from heaven and to be an expression of His Kingdom on earth. The fall

of man was not the loss of heaven but rather the loss of the Kingdom government of heaven on earth. The word “**Kingdom**” (dominion) has been **reintroduced** here and **God’s glory** was not yet completely restored upon men, it was **only in a cloud and showed to Moses. Obedience is the key!**

- ¹⁹ *I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you **life and death, blessing and cursing**; therefore **choose life**, that both you and your descendants may live; ²⁰ that you may love the LORD your God, **that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.**” (Deuteronomy 30:19-20). A choice to His people to get away from all those curses, to receive His blessings, to **inherit the land** where they will have peace, protection, food, health, joy, welfare etc. Don’t forget: **obey His voice**, which is applicable through all ages. **God’s glory was in the Tabernacle!** In a later stage God’s glory was in the Temple in Jerusalem.*
- Some announcements of **the restore of the Kingdom of God with Jesus first coming**: *The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like **Eden**, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing (Isaiah 51:3).* Thank you Lord, we are back in Eden. Thank you for your mercy. *But Lord, you remain the same forever! **Your throne continues from generation to generation.** Why do you continue to forget us? Why have you abandoned us for so long? **Restore us, O Lord, and bring us back to you again! Give us back the joys we once had!** (Lamentations 5:19-21).* The Kingship of our Lord continues from generation to generation. *And in the days of these kings **the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever (Daniel 2:44).*** **Jesus** the rock of all ages **will come into the earth with His first coming**, crush all other kingdoms, and **bring in the Kingdom of God**, which will grow as a mountain that fill the earth.

4. The hunger of the human heart.

Mankind’s failure through disobedience to his Creator resulted in the loss of the Kingdom (Garden of Eden) and all its benefits. **We lost** (banned out) **The Heaven on earth!** It is important to note here that when man fell from grace, he lost a kingdom, not a religion. This is why religion can never satisfy the deep hunger in the heart of man. Religion is itself the search. No religion can substitute for the Kingdom or fill the vacuum in man’s soul. The hunger of the human heart is for the lost Kingdom. **Our deep desire is to get back to Heaven on earth**, for we have been created to live in a heaven on earth, the Garden of Eden.

5. The message of the Bible.

A careful and honest look at the biblical Script will reveal that the fundamental message of the Bible is **about a King and a Kingdom**. The Bible is not primarily about a religion or rituals, but about **the establishment of a Kingdom rulership on this planet from the heavenly realm**. It is about a divine project of governing earth from Heaven through mankind. In practical terms, the Bible is about a royal family mandated to colonize earth from Heaven. This kingdom assignment is the priority of God the Creator and the object of mankind’s inherent pursuit.

“Let them have dominion over the earth”. God’s plan for man was to extend His heavenly Kingdom (government) to the earth through the principle of **colonization**. Man’s assignment was to establish the influence and culture of heaven on earth by representing the nature, values, and morality of God in the earth. In this way, God’s heavenly rule would manifest itself on earth through His extended image in mankind. This was the first Kingdom: Yahweh, the King, extending His heavenly Kingdom to earth through His offspring, man. This is the wonderful story of the Bible – not a religion, but a

royal family. Government is serious business, but on the other hand its easy. Relax, it is His work through you.

Jesus said "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent (Luke 4:43). You say rightly that I am a King. For this cause I was born (John18:37).

6. Misunderstanding of Jesus and His Kingdom.

No one who has ever lived has been misunderstood more than the young teacher who happened to be born, not by preference but by promise, through the line of the Old Testament patriarch Abraham – Jesus the Christ. Misunderstanding Jesus has caused Muslims to reject Him, Hindus to suspect Him, Buddhists to ignore Him, atheists to hate Him, and agnostics to deny Him.

Many of the founders of the different world views as Pythagoras in Greece, Buddha and Mahavira in India, Zarathustra in Persia, Confucius and Lao-tse (Taoism) in China, **shifted their attention from the shared happiness (Ubuntu principle!) on earth to individual (more Western) happiness in the heavenly realms.** The earth is dismissed as misleading, now revolves around the happiness of the individual soul that beholds the heavenly truth. One people remains stubbornly hoping for earthly happiness for all peoples: **Israel continues to look for salvation in the here and now, that will come with the coming of the Messiah.** Jesus is also living from this perspective. Not for nothing at His birth the angels sing "Peace on Earth". Christianity explains later, however - under the influence of the ancient Greeks and Church Father Augustine - yet the emphasis on individual salvation in the hereafter.

The Jewish, who (even) had physical contact with Jesus, in fact **did understand that the purpose of the Kingdom was for this earth:** ⁶ *So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?" (Acts 1:6).* The Jews were hoping to be released from the Roman suppressors, however they missed the essence that the **solution was in an invisible (spiritual) Kingdom** and therefore many Jews missed the Kingdom: *But many Israelites—those for whom the Kingdom was prepared—will be thrown into outer darkness (this is not the final punishment, but outside the Kingdom), where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."* (Matthew 8:12). For sure no one could stop the Kingdom, and for that reason the Kingdom has been taken away from the Jewish and given to the gentiles as written: *The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?* ⁴³ *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it (Matthew 21:42-43).* Those Jews who did understand The Kingdom in that period, were **able to flee to a save heaven on earth** (the hills in Judea, Matthew 24:16) during the great tribulation and destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (AD 70).

But it just may be those who claim to represent Him the most – **Christians** – who have in fact (partly) misunderstood and , therefore, **misrepresented Him the most.**

- Some Christians have misunderstood Him as the founder of a religion and have transformed His teachings and His methods into customs and His activities into rituals: *"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in (Matthew 23:13).* See also Matthew 5:20, 15:1-3, 15:6b, 21:31b).
- Many Christians (the majority) have also reduced His message to nothing more than an **escapist plan for getting to heaven** and His promises as a mere fire insurance policy for escaping the pains of a tormenting hell. As we have seen in this chapter, this misinterpretation is coming from the Greek culture and Church Father Augustine. But my dear friends, **Jesus is much more than our Saviour** who overthrew death. **He is also our Deliverer and King! Don't forget: Jesus**

is King in the Kingdom here on earth, until His second coming!! The Kingdom is mend to start here on earth as a spiritual Kingdom. After this earthly period Jesus will hand over the Kingdom to His Father (1 Corinthians 15:24), Jesus job is done than! Enter the maturity of the Kingdom, enjoy the benefits, be victorious, reign with Him, serve in this way this beautiful Rainbow Nation.

*And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory (Colossians 3:1-4). Cool he, Christ is revealed already 2000 years ago to the whole world, and as a result: **you will share in all his glory!** For he called you to share in his Kingdom and glory (1 Thessalonians 2:12b).*

7. We are suited for the earth.

God created the earth as a place over which to extend His influence, but He intended to do it through mankind, not Himself. He designed man to be a colonizer of the physical world He wanted to colonize. That is why humans are so well suited physically for life in this world. The Bible says that God created man "*from the dust of the ground*" (Genesis 2:7). Scientific evidence confirms this. Our bodies are made of the same stuff as the earth. Man is triune being just like his Creator. *Man is a spirit being after the nature and essence of his source, Father God; he lives in a body, which is his earth suit that allows him to relate to the physical environment; and he possesses a soul, which is his intellect, will, and emotional faculties.* We are suited for the earth as perfectly God is suited for Heaven".

God owns the earth and everything on it; the earth is His crown land. As an ancient poet wrote: ¹ *The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.* ² *For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters (Psalm 24:1-2).* Because God owns the earth, He can do with it however He pleases. And it pleased Him to give it to man. Again in the words of the ancient poet: *The Heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's; But the earth He has given to the children of men (Psalm 115:16).* Don't make the mistake of equating this with ownership. We possess the earth as a trust, as stewards, as "kings" under the High King of Heaven. The King gave us dominion over the earth, not as owners but as vassal-king to extend His heavenly government to the earthly realm. ²³ *The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me.* ²⁴ *And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land (Leviticus 25:23-24).* We have the privilege to rule the earth, and with that privilege also comes the responsibility of wise and righteous management. And we are accountable to the King for how we manage our domain.

Once again let me illustrate the relationship between God, the King of Heaven, and man, His regent on earth. Because God is a King, and because a Kingdom is a country ruled by a king and must therefore have territory, we can draw the conclusion that Heaven is a *place*. It is not some nebulous, mystical idea from the mind of man. Heaven is a real Kingdom with real government. The fact that its primary realm encompasses the spiritual dimension of creation does not make it any less real. But the realm of the Kingdom of Heaven also takes in the natural world. God designed it this way when He created earth and then fashioned man in His own image to rule it for Him. The sequence of events here is very important. God envisioned man to be a king in his own right, but a king is not a king unless he has territory over which to rule. So God prepared the territory first – the earth – and then brought forth man. God placed man on the earth and told him, "I am giving you dominion over this physical domain. You have authority over every acre of land and sea and over every creature (not humans) that inhabits the earth. Rule it freely as My legal representative." God does not want to come here were we are responsible, so that we can retain our authority as earthly kings. This is also why Jesus is not anxious for us to go to the invisible country of Heaven because when we do, we are reduced to princess and princesses. He prayed that we would not be taken out of the world but be kept in it, but away from evil. The earth is man's key to dominion power and his only

legal territory for rulership. A careful review of the model prayer of our Lord Jesus reveals that it specifically identifies the location of the Father and King of Heaven: "*Our Father who is in Heaven.....*" His location is the key to our power and authority on earth. If He comes to earth, we lose our privileged position. Mankind was designed to serve as a corporate rulership of kings representing their Father, the King of Heaven, in the colony called earth.

And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.
(Revelation 5:10).

8. The Kingdom principles.

Allow me to go with you through the Kingdom principles to get back to our hearts desire:
Heaven on earth!

8.1 The word "Kingdom.

The Greek Bible is giving this explanation for the word "Kingdom": royal power, kingship, dominion, rule, not to be confused with an actual kingdom but rather the right or authority to rule over a kingdom, of the royal power of Jesus as the triumphant Messiah, of the royal power and dignity conferred on Christians in the Messiah's kingdom, a kingdom, the territory subject to the rule of a king, used in the N.T. to refer to the reign of the Messiah. **So, the Kingdom is not an actual place, but rather the right or authority to rule with royal power. The Kingdom is a way of living, it is the manifestation of heaven on earth within and through you.**

A kingdom is.....: The governing influence of a king over his territory, impacting it with his personal will, purpose, and intent, producing a culture, values, morals, and a lifestyle that reflect the king's desires and nature for his citizens (Myles Munroe).

8.2 Some facts about the Kingdom.

- The Kingdom came **with Jesus first coming**: *But if I am casting out demons **by the Spirit of God**, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you. (Matthew 12:28).*
- *In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² and saying, "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!**" (Matthew 3:3).* The first words and main message of John the Baptist: **The Kingdom!**
- *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people (Matthew 4:23).* The first words and main message of Jesus: **The gospel of the Kingdom!** All accompanied with healing power.
- The Kingdom of God is **not of this world**: *Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation (Luke 17:20). Nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, **the kingdom of God is within you** (Luke 17:21). God's Kingdom during the whole New Testament is a **spiritual Kingdom**, it's **within you**. The Greek Bible about the word "within": ἐντός,ρ {en-tos'}, within, inside, within you i.e. in the midst of you, within you i.e. your soul. His Kingship and Kingdom is not of this world, not visible, not time limited, but spiritual (John 18:36). **His Kingdom was, it is, and it comes in the hearts of the people in the eternal now.***
- **Jesus reigns and is Lord and King in the Kingdom to put everything under His feet, until His second coming**: *Then comes the end, **when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father**, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power (1 Corinthians 15:24). You say rightly that **I am a king. For this cause I was born** (John 18:37).*
- **When do you enter the Kingdom**: Once we bow down for King Jesus and accept His payment for our sins we are entering the Kingdom here on earth, which is our salvation as written: *Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you*

are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." (John 3:3). Your salvation is secure as written: *If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9). I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me (John 10:28).*

- He has **delivered us from the power of darkness** and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love (Colossians 1:13). A huge transformation!
- **The Kingdom stands firm:** *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Hebrews 12:18).*
- The King "Jesus" is the ultimate and **only source of authority** in His Kingdom. ¹² "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. ¹³ You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. ¹⁴ Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it! (John 14:12-14).
- **Jesus became King with His first coming** as written: *He would raise up the Christ to sit on the throne of David (Acts 2:29-34), to fulfill the prophesy of the prophet Zechariah: Tell the daughter of Zion, behold, your King is coming to you (Matthew 21:5).*
- "So **don't be afraid**, little flock. For **it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom** (Luke 12:32). The eyes of the LORD search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to Him (2 Chronicles 16:9). Luke 12 is continuing regarding the restrictions of the Father's happiness to give you the Kingdom: *Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Luke 12:33-34).*
- **The keys of the Kingdom:** Authority, access, ownership, control, authorization, power and freedom.
- ... *But now the Good News of the Kingdom of God is preached, and **everyone is eager to get in** (Luke 16:16).* Once people learn about the Kingdom of God, they can't wait to get in and grow into the maturity of the Kingdom!
- **In what kind of people wants the Lord to dwell:** *For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: " I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones (Isaiah 57:15).*
- **How to preach the Kingdom:** Luke 10:1-12 is very simple about that. *Go your way. Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals. First say 'Peace to this house'. And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you (you won't be frustrated). And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 'The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.' But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city.*
- ²⁹ "Yes," Jesus replied, "and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or wife or brothers or parents or children, **for the sake of the Kingdom of God, ³⁰ will be repaid many times over in this life**, and will have eternal life in the world to come." (Luke 18:29-30). I like this one. This is about bringing offerings, shouldering your cross. And what is the result? Being repaid many times **in this life!** Are you still with me? The Kingdom and its benefits are for the here and now. O yeah, I forgot (by the way): *and you will have eternal life in the world to come. Stop focusing on future eternal life!!!* That makes the Church and our lives so weak and miserable. **We do have a message and a solution for now! The Kingdom!**
- *For he called you to share in his Kingdom and glory (1 Thessalonians 2:12).*

- Have you noticed the beginning and the end of the book of Acts: *During the forty days after His crucifixion, He appeared to the apostles from time to time, and he proved to them in many ways that he was actually alive. **On these occasions He talked to them about the Kingdom of God** (Acts 1:3).* The book of Acts is about the first church and it has an open end and still continues talking about the nowadays church. In the last verse of the book of Acts is written: *For the next two years, Paul lived in Rome at his own expense. He welcomed all who visited him,³¹ **boldly proclaiming the Kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ. And no one tried to stop him** (Acts 28:30-31).*

Preparation for the second coming of Christ is based on our participation in all that was made available in Christ at His first coming.

8.3 The Kingdom is all about priorities.

³¹ *So don't worry about having enough food or drink or clothing* ³² *These things dominate the thoughts of unbelievers, but your heavenly Father already knows all your needs.* ³³ *and he will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern (Matthew 6:31-33).* This is so difficult for us and one of the biggest challenges of believers. Look at the word *if*: You will also receive your own benefit (prosperity) *if* your focus is right. And have a look at "**from day to day**". That is even more difficult. Some people worry so much about tomorrow that they forget about today. Life's greatest failure is to be successful in the wrong assignment. Success in life is measured by the effective use of one's time.

What are these priorities that master most of human race? The answer is perhaps found in the work of Abraham Maslow who, after studying the motivations of human behaviour, concluded that all human behaviour is driven by the same basic "hierarchy of needs":

1. water 2. food 3. clothes 4. housing 5. protection 6. security 7. preservation 8. self-actualization 9. significance. Perhaps if we are honest, we would agree that the human race does indeed strive for all of these things. We go to work every day, and some even hold down for two or more jobs, just to secure water, food, clothing, housing and protection. **What a tragedy, to think that the basic priority driving most humans is that of simple survival!** It is a pity to see that sometimes a lot of what we call "faith" is nothing more than striving for the very things on Maslow's list. This human behaviour is based on fear, which is feed by our opponent Satan. Be honest with yourself. Yes it is difficult to live from manna everyday. It is not easy, but if you have the courage to conquer this enemy, in the mighty name of Jesus, you will be amazed about what God had and has in stock for you. At the same time we absolutely can't say that if we are in a difficult situation (hunger, sickness, war, poverty, etc.) that our faith is not strong enough! Our knowledge and understanding is limited, and suffering is a part of our journey.

My dear friends, Jesus Christ came to earth and re-established God's number one priority: **make the Kingdom of God your primary concern.** Do you have the courage to say our God is a liar and not able to supply your daily needs? No? Than, just trust Him, obey and walk in faith, focus on the Kingdom and don't stop with the salvation. God wants us to prepare for the future but to live for the moment. Learn from the Jewish history as written: *The people refused to enter the pleasant land, for they wouldn't believe his promise to care for them (Psalm 106:24).* The thrust of this principle is that our confidence in our Creator's obligation and commitment to sustain His creation should lead us to transfer our priority from our basic human needs to the priority of cultivating and maintaining a healthy relationship with His Kingdom and with Himself.

Once again: *and he will give you all you need from day to day if you live for him and make the Kingdom of God your primary concern.* This declaration by Jesus also suggests that there must be something about the Kingdom that all mankind has missed and misunderstood. If everything we pursue and strive for to live and survive are found in the Kingdom, then we have been misguided and perhaps imposed on ourselves unnecessary

hardship, stress, and frustration. *Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble (Matthew 6:34).*

8.4 The Kingdom and His righteousness.

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you (Matthew 6:33). Our God is a **God of justice and righteousness. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled (Matthew 5:6).** This justice and righteousness is not exclusive for Christians. People, governments, authorities etc. who are dealing just and right are in line with God's will and blessed! Our Lord loves us so much that He wants justice and righteousness for every human being: *For I, the LORD, love justice (Isaiah 61:8). The Sovereign LORD will show his justice to the nations of the world. Everyone will praise him! His righteousness will be like a garden in early spring, with plants springing up everywhere (Isaiah 61:11).* This is our God: ⁶ *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* ⁷ *Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with justice and righteousness from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this (Isaiah 9:6-7).*



The United Nations (as governing power under the King of Kings) is taking the lead and their responsibility in the world regarding justice and righteousness. The world leaders promised in September 2000 to achieve eight Millennium Development Goals in the year 2015. This is very good and in line with God's will as the UN is stating: *"Time is short. We must seize this historic moment to act responsibly and decisively for the common good."* More information on www.un.org/millenniumgoals/.

The Churches globally are supporting this process by the Micah Challenge: *Micah Challenge is a global coalition of Christians holding governments to account for their promise to halve extreme poverty by 2015. We want to encourage Christians worldwide to deepen their commitment to the poor and to speak out to leaders to act with justice.* More information on www.micahchallenge.org.

...what does the LORD require of you? To do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God (Micah 6:8).

Next verses are describing the relation between knowing the Lord and doing justice: ¹⁵ *But a beautiful cedar palace does not make a great king! Your father, Josiah, also had plenty to eat and drink. But he was just and right in all his dealings. That is why God blessed him.* ¹⁶ ***He gave justice and help to the poor and needy, and everything went well for him. Isn't that what it means to know me?"*** says the LORD (JEREMIAH 22:15-16).

8.5 "Kingdoms" through the ages.

The prophet Daniel had a proper view regarding "Kingdoms" or better spoken "governing powers" through the ages:

Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had a dream in which God revealed the future. Daniel was able to tell the king his dream and give its interpretation. Daniel told the king that he saw in his dream a tremendous statue with different parts. **A rock appeared (Jesus),** hit the feet of the statue, causing it to collapse. Finally **the stone (The Kingdom of King Jesus) became a great mountain and filled the whole earth** (Daniel 2:31-35). Daniel then revealed to the king what the dream meant: ³⁷ *You, O king, are this head of gold.* ³⁹ *But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth.* ⁴⁰ *And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and*

shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others (Daniel 2:37-40). Daniel is speaking about four earthly kingdoms, one following after the other. Daniel told the king that his kingdom, the Babylonian, was the first kingdom. Other passages in the book of Daniel identify further about these kingdoms: 1. Babylonian empire 2. Medo-Persian empire (Daniel 5:28, 8:20) 3. Greek empire (Daniel 8:21) 4. Roman empire. Indeed, we know from history that there were four consecutive kingdoms in that region of the world. Daniel then explained the rock in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which crushed those kingdoms and grew into a mountain that filled the earth: ⁴⁴ *And in the days of these kings **the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever (Daniel 2:44).*** Well, Jesus the rock of all ages came into the earth with His first coming, crushed all other kingdoms, and brought in the spiritual Kingdom of God with His first coming, which will grow as a mountain that fill the earth. Jesus, The Rock came during the last of the four empires, that of the Romans and finally the Roman Empire has been crushed in A.D. 476.

Daniel 7 is continuing with some interesting phrases regarding the interpretation of the vision:

- *But **the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever (Daniel 7:18).*** The Kingdom is for us!
- *I was watching; and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing against them, ²² until the Ancient of Days came, and a judgment was made in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom (Daniel 7:21-22).* The fight with the four great beasts has been won by God the Father Himself, 2000 years ago, and as a result, the saints and we possess the Kingdom from that that time on. Next verses are also confirming the outcome of this battle:
- ²⁶ *But the court shall be seated, and **they shall take away his (great beast) dominion, to consume and destroy it forever.** ²⁷ **Then (at that time) the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High. His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him (Daniel 7:26-27).** His (spiritual) Kingdom started with Jesus first coming as written: *But if I am casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you. (Matthew 12:28).**

Indeed, after the Roman Empire, no other empire achieved such a superior dominance. Opposite the USSR we found the United States. And even after the fall of the Berlin Wall power remains fragmented. Where are we in the year 2009? Daniel prophesied that from all those empires eventually nothing will remain. We see this happening through the ages. Who speaks today about Babylon, Medes of Byzantium? Even the Roman Empire gets forgotten, while Napoleon, Hitler and Stalin have been mainly know from the history books. Then, who has the future? Daniel has a clear view. A rock rumbles on all political conceit. Gold, iron and clay are pulverized to dust. A new kingdom will fill the whole earth. What are the characteristic of this Kingdom? It arises and begins to move while the "earthly powerful" people are not aware of it. The growth of this Kingdom is not dependent on whatever political system. Its citizens seem to thrive in both dictatorships and democracies. Its borders are open and all asylum seekers (refugees) may enter. Its victory is certain because God himself is the founder. Nobody who is delighted in the arrival of King will be crushed by this stone. And when the time will soon be replaced by eternity, everyone will be full of the King, Jesus Christ.

Are you still with me after this message of the Prophet Daniel? Are you smelling your freedom and ability to **enter into the maturity of the spiritual Kingdom, now, and under all circumstances!!** Everyone, under every circumstances, is able to enter the Kingdom life *now* and experience, explore, apply, practice, and enjoy living with the benefits,



promises, and privileges of Heaven on earth. **Let the adventure begin! There is only one government, The Kingdom of God, within you!**

8.6 The Kingdom, a royal contract.

In a kingdom, the constitution is a *royal contract* that the king has with his subjects – his citizens. It is *not* the contract that the citizens have with the king, and this is a very important distinction. In the first, the contract originates with the king and in the second, with the people. A contract generated by the people is a *democracy*, the complete opposite of a kingdom. A royal contract, on the other hand, originates completely and exclusively in the heart, mind, and will of the king. His citizens have no input concerning the terms or conditions of the contract.

This is the approach the King of Heaven has always taken with mankind. When God began to establish a Kingdom colony on earth, He set out all the conditions and parameters beforehand. Everything was already in place by the time Adam arrived on the scene. All Adam (and Abraham and we) had to do was follow the terms and conditions that God had already established:

- ²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image,..; **let them have dominion over the fish of the sea...** ²⁸ Then **God blessed them**, and God said to them, "**Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over**" (Genesis 1:26-28).
- ⁸ The LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. ¹⁵ Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. ¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:8, 15-17). As you can see, this entire contractual process was completely unilateral on God's part. Adam had no input at all; in fact, when the contract was drawn up, he wasn't even around yet! After he was created, Adam simply received the completed contract from the hand of the King. And have a look in which environment Adam was placed: beautiful trees, delicious fruit, rivers watering the land, exceptionally pure gold, beautiful stones, the Lord created animals for the human as a companion who will help him, the Lord created the women (Genesis 2). **The Garden of Eden, a heavenly place on earth.**
- The same is true regarding God's contract with Abraham. First, God determined what He was going to do and then presented Abraham with the completed contract: ¹ Now the LORD had said to Abram: "**Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; And you shall be a blessing.** ³ I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; And **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**" This is the Kingdom principle, His will for us: Get out, inherit the land and be blessed. Have you noticed the protection against curses! And again: ¹ After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. **I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.**" ⁵ Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."⁶ **And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness** (Genesis 15:1, 5-6). Well, my dear friends, a great example of a proper cooperation between the seen and the unseen world.
- The King tells you what he wants to happen to you: ¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, **thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.** ¹² Then **you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.** ¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you **search for Me with all your heart.** ¹⁴ I will be found by you, says the LORD, and **I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will**

bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive (Jeremiah 29:11-14). So, the Kingdom constitution states the King's desires for His citizens. And because He is a righteous and benevolent King, His desires are always for our greatest good and benefit. The King of Heaven wants to bless us; He wants blessings to overtake us. We are always trying to tell God what to do, especially today: "Here's what I want, here's what I want, here's what I want..... " But God says, "In *this Kingdom, I make the contracts.*

My dear friends, bow down on your knees with me and let these words be your words, direct from your heart: ¹¹ *But the LORD's plans stand firm forever; his intentions can never be shaken.* ¹² *What joy for the nation whose God is the LORD, whose people he has chosen as his inheritance.* ¹³ *The LORD looks down from heaven and sees the whole human race.* ¹⁴ *From his throne he observes all who live on the earth.* ¹⁵ **He made their hearts, so he understands everything they do.** ¹⁶ *The best-equipped army cannot save a king, nor is great strength enough to save a warrior.* ¹⁷ *Don't count on your warhorse to give you victory—for all its strength, it cannot save you.* ¹⁸ *But the LORD watches over those who fear him, those who rely on his unfailing love.* ¹⁹ *He rescues them from death and keeps them alive in times of famine.* ²⁰ *We put our hope in the LORD. He is our help and our shield.* ²¹ *In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name.* ²² *Let your unfailing love surround us, LORD, for our hope is in you alone (Psalm 33:11-22).*

One condition: If God says, "I will bless you, I will prosper you, I will make your name great,...." that's constitution. If He then says, "... If you **obey Me** and **keep My word**, and **walk uprightly**", He has given you laws that set the conditions for the benefits and privileges to apply: ⁷ *The instructions of the LORD are perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.* ⁸ *The commandments of the LORD are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are clear, giving insight for living.* ⁹ *Reverence for the LORD is pure, lasting forever. The laws of the LORD are true; each one is fair.* ¹⁰ *They are more desirable than gold, even the finest gold. They are sweeter than honey, even honey dripping from the comb.* ¹¹ *They are a warning to your servant, a great reward for those who obey them (Psalm 19:7-11).*

8.7 The Kingdom's citizenship.

All nations, including kingdoms, have citizens. And all nations require immigration status. The Kingdom of God is no different. Every Kingdom citizen today is a naturalized citizen. We emigrated from a foreign country – a "dominion of darkness" into His Kingdom as written: *For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son (Colossians 1:13).*

When Jesus Christ began His public ministry, He announced that the Kingdom of Heaven had arrived. He brought back to earth the Kingdom we lost at Eden and gave us access to it again. We enter the Kingdom of Heaven through the process that Jesus called being "born again" (John 3:3). Many believers call this "being saved", but I think of the new birth as the "naturalization" process by which we become Kingdom citizens. The new birth makes us naturalized citizens of the Kingdom. It also "naturalizes" us in the sense that it returns us to our *original* "natural" state of authority and dominion over the earth as God intended from the start. When we become citizens of God's Kingdom, it means that we voluntarily align ourselves with a new government and a new country, embracing its language, its ideals, and its values.

The Kingdom constitution is explicit regarding our citizenship: *We are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God in the spiritual Kingdom of God (Ephesians 2:18-22).* ²⁰ *But we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior.* ²¹ *He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control (Philippians 3:20-21).* *Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the*

*kingdom of light (Colossians 1:12). We are the People of God, already seated "with Him in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 2:6). Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). And have a look at this one: No, **you have come to Mount Zion**, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering.²³ You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect.²⁴ You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24). I have no words. What a spiritual explosion! We, right now, on the Mount Zion where God lives! We, right now, in the heavenly Jerusalem, together with the angels and the saints and Jesus in a joyful gathering! Who may climb **the mountain of the LORD**? Who may stand in his holy place?⁴ Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies.⁵ They will receive the LORD's blessing and have a right relationship with God their savior.⁶ Such people may seek you and worship in your presence, O God of Jacob.⁷ Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter (Psalm 24:3-7).*

Not only does the new birth make us citizens of Heaven, but our citizenship begins *immediately*, right now. Why is this so important? Here's why: **Religion postpones citizenship to the future!** They are wrong. **The Kingdom has come!** Kingdom citizenship is never postponed. The Kingdom of God is present and functional on the earth *right now*. If you have been "born again" then you have been naturalized and are a Kingdom citizen *right now*. **You can never appropriate what you postpone.** That's what you call "locking up the Kingdom of God" to those who want to get in and grow into maturity of the Kingdom, already here on earth. That is why so many religious people live defeated, destitute, and frustrated lives. And what about the fruit they are bearing? They believe they have to wait for their "reward".

All Kingdom citizens are simultaneously citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven as well citizens of the earthly nation. We don't give up our earthly citizenship when we become citizens of the Kingdom. And in the same way, we don't have to be in Heaven to benefit from heavenly jurisdiction. Our citizenship is constant and eternal, and the Kingdom government exercises jurisdiction over us wherever we are. One example of our constant Kingdom citizenship: *All who are victorious will become pillars in the Temple of my God, and they will never have to leave it. And I will write on them the name of my God, and they will be citizens in the city of my God—the new Jerusalem that comes down from heaven from my God. And I will also write on them my new name (Revelation 3:12).* We are citizens of the new Jerusalem right now, and we never have to leave it. The Kingdom constitution says that we are *in* the world but not *of* the world. Even though we are in a foreign territory – actually our government's colony – our registration is not here. When it says our citizenship is in Heaven, it means that our registration, our official documentation, is not on earth. When we are born again, our names are written in Heaven's "official registry" as valid confirmation that we are now citizens of Heaven, even though we still live in the colony. So, even though we are physically away from the Kingdom "country", we are still citizens of the Kingdom. So all Kingdom citizens possess dual citizenship – in Heaven and on earth.

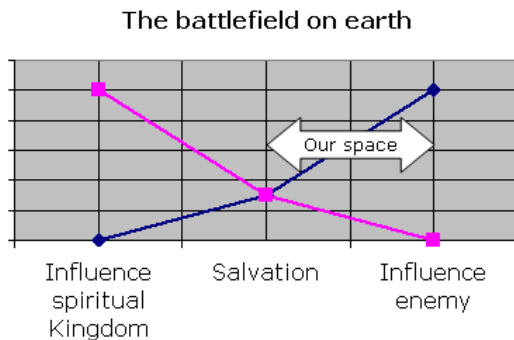
²² *No, you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to countless thousands of angels in a joyful gathering.²³ You have come to the assembly of God's firstborn children, **whose names are written in heaven**. You have come to God himself, who is the judge over all things. You have come to the spirits of the righteous ones in heaven who have now been made perfect.²⁴ You have come to Jesus, the one who mediates the new covenant between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the*

blood of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24). I like this one. We are citizens of the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem together with the angels and the saints.

²⁸ *Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe.* ²⁹ *For our God is a devouring fire (Hebrews 12:28-29).*

8.8 The battlefield on earth, your space in the spiritual Kingdom.

Allow me to explain the battlefield on earth. The (spiritual) Kingdom of God is progressively extended over the whole world until all of the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of God. *The enemy has been defeated because of the blood of the Lamb and by our testimony (Revelation 12:11).* Once we bow down for King Jesus and accept His payment for our sins we are entering the spiritual Kingdom here on earth, which is our salvation as written: *Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." (John 3:3).* Your salvation is secure as written: *If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved (Romans 10:9). I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me (John 10:28).* From the



moment of your salvation until you die (your earthly body), you are able to freely move (up and down) in the space as shown in the graph. This is your space in the (spiritual) Kingdom here on earth, and at the same time the battlefield. You are able to grow, but also to fall back, but never beyond your salvation. The enemy has been defeated, so you should be able to enter into the maturity of the (spiritual) Kingdom, already here on earth and taste the benefits already before you leave your earthly body. Be aware: you are never free from this conflict as written: *These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict (Galatians 5:17).*

8.9 The Kingdom, giving to the King.

The coming of Jesus Christ as King demonstrates another important characteristic of God: **He is a giver.** First, He gave man the earth to rule. Then, after man lost his Kingdom, God gave His Son so that we could get man's Kingdom back. Jesus gave Himself, even to the point of death, to salvage man from the effects and consequences of his rebellion against God. In the coming of Jesus, and throughout the Bible we see over and over that giving is a fundamental principle of the Kingdom of Heaven. **God is a giver.** In fact, **His honor as King of Heaven demands a gift.** As God, He gives because it is His nature. **As Kingdom citizens, we give because we are like Him, created in His image and likeness, and because giving is a proper way to honor a king.**

Royal Kingdom principles of giving:

- **The power of kings is displayed in their wealth.** The most obvious way that wealth displays a king's power is the ability to give generously, lavishly, and even recklessly of his wealth to his citizens as well as to outsiders who visit his kingdom.
- **The purpose for a king's wealth is to secure his reputation – his glory.** Every conscientious king wants to be known as good, benevolent, magnanimous, and just. He is constantly concerned for the complete welfare of his people. He wants to be able to show the world that he can provide his citizens with anything and everything they need. Want in a kingdom is a shame to the king. So a king's reputation is tied to his ability to take care of his citizens, and the ability is directly related to his wealth. A king whose people are secure in his benevolent provision will be loved by his people, respected by other kings and rulers, and will

enjoy a stable secure reign. His reputation is firmly established, and his glory shines to all around.

- **The glory of a king is his power to out-give another king.** This is another reason why wealth is important to a king. Kings are deeply and continually concerned with their reputations, and no king like the thought that another king might be richer, more benevolent, or more giving than he. Consequently, kings will give freely in response to a gift given to them, or from pure beneficence, often wildly out of proportion to the value of the gift received or the merit of the recipient. This is definitely a characteristic of the King of Heaven. As owner of literally everything, God is the richest King that was, is, or ever will be. No one can out-give God. And He gives lavishly without regard to our merit or our ability to repay.
- **Giving places a demand on the king's wealth.** Wealth that is not used for anything serves no purpose. Righteous and benevolent king's do not seek riches simply for their own enrichment and pleasure. They don't acquire wealth just so they can sit atop the pile and say, "Look at me! See how rich I am!". Good kings use their wealth to bring prosperity to their people and improve the quality of their lives. This way the king's riches do not stagnate or rot away. In keeping with a fundamental principle of wealth-building, good kings know how to make their wealth work for them – they give it away in order to receive more. It is a principle of reciprocity – giving begets giving. The principle of reciprocity works both ways. Giving to a king places demand on his wealth because a king cannot allow himself to be out-given. Whatever he receives as a gift he must return in multiplied form. This brings us to the next principle of giving.
- **Giving requires a response from the king.** When you give to a king, he is obligated not only to respond to your gift but also to exceed it. When the queen of Sheba visited King Solomon of Israel, her gifts to him of spices, large quantities of gold and precious stones, was fitting protocol. However, she was not prepared for the magnitude of wealth found in Solomon's court (1 Kings 10). As lavish as the queen's gifts to Solomon were, his gifts to her in return far exceeded hers to him. The King of Heaven is the same way. When we give to Him, He responds in kind but in much greater measure. Jesus said: *Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.* (Luke 6:38). We can never out-give God. Give, and He will give abundantly and overflowing in return. It's a principle of His Kingdom. Besides, His reputation and glory are at stake.
- **Giving to a king attracts His wealth to the giver.** Giving begets giving. This principle works both ways. Kings give away wealth in order to gain more wealth. But when we give to the King, it begets giving back to us because our generosity attracts the King's wealth to us. This is directly related to the concept of stewardship versus ownership. As long as we feel we own what we have, we tend to cling to it and hold it close to our chest. In that posture, it is impossible to receive more. We can't receive anything with closed fists and clenched fingers. On the other hand, when we approach the King open-handed with our things, not only can we lay them at His feet as a gift, but we are also in the posture to receive. Giving to the King attracts His wealth because He is a giver and is attracted to those who share like spirit.

Never approach Him with nothing! *And none shall appear before Me empty-handed (Exodus 34:20).* **Our gifts reveals our value or "worth-ship" of the King.** The quality of what we offer the King and the attitude with which we offer it reveal much more than our words do of the value or worthiness we attach to Him. Quality doesn't mean expensive or fancy necessarily, but it does offering our very best. And our gift does not necessarily have to be of monetary value. Of much greater value to the King is the gift of a heart that seeks the Kingdom and His righteousness. **Worship demands a gift and giving is worship.** "Worth-ship" is were we get "worship". To worship the King means to ascribe worth or worthiness to Him. Worship demands a gift, but it may be a

gift of praise, a gift of thanksgiving, a gift of confession, a gift of surrender, a gift of forgiveness, or a gift of a tender and obedient heart as well as a monetary gift. **It is more blessed to give than to receive** (Acts 20:35).

Give Him glory, He is worthy of praise! ² *And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe.* ³ **The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command (Hebrews 1:2-3a). And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).** The "Word" – Jesus – became flesh and dwelt among us already since more than 2000 years. As we have seen we lost God's glory while leaving the Garden of Eden, however in Jesus **we beheld His glory again!** Our God is a God of restore.

My dear friends, I have seen poverty and people living in very difficult situations in South Africa, and my heart cries, and I have taken my responsibility regarding this. If you are living in such a situation, please apply this principle of giving and bearing fruit under every circumstance! I have seen too much apathy too. Giving is a very important instrument to receive in abundance. If you are unemployed, why spending your days in emptiness, and not taking your responsibility in your community. Visit some lonely people, do charity work, keep your area clean, organize street games for the youth, etc. This will cause our dear Lord to give you back in abundance in areas where you need it. For instance getting a job. Try it, you will be surprised what the Lord has in stock for you. You have such an important instrument available, the instrument and blessing of giving! It is all in stock, you just have to unpack it by for instance applying this principle of giving, as written: *No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him (1 Corinthians 2:9).* And your good deeds are also planned long ago: *For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago (Ephesians 2:10).* And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, you can produce good fruit, that is, good deeds for God (Romans 7:4). Unpack it all, do it!

Your salvation is your ticket to enter the Kingdom life and you never have to leave that, however your good deeds/works, the fruit you bear, is the present you take with you to present to the Kings of Kings and Lord of Lords.

*Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! **Try it! Put me to the test!** (Malachi 3:10).*

8.10 The Kingdom in the Old Testament.

¹⁰ *Then David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly: "O Lord, the God of our ancestor Israel may you be praised forever and ever! ¹¹ Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. Everything in the heavens and on earth is yours, **O Lord, and this is your kingdom. We adore you** as the one who is over all things. ¹² Wealth and honor come from you alone, for you rule over everything. **Power and might are in your hand, and at your discretion people are made great and given strength.** ¹³ "O our God, **we thank you and praise your glorious name!** ¹⁴ But who am I, and who are my people, that we could give anything to you? **Everything we have has come from you,** and we give you only what you first gave us! ¹⁵ **We are here for only a moment,** visitors and strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us. Our days on earth are like a passing shadow, gone so soon without a trace. ¹⁶ "O Lord our God, even this material we have gathered to build a Temple to honor your holy name comes from you! **It all belongs to you!** ¹⁷ I know, my God, that **you examine our hearts and rejoice when you find integrity there.** You know I have done all this with good motives, and I have watched **your people offer their gifts willingly and joyously.** ¹⁸ "O Lord, the God of our ancestors Abraham, Isaac,*

and Israel, **make your people always want to obey you.** See to it that **their love for you never changes.** ¹⁹ Give my son Solomon the wholehearted desire to obey all your commands, laws, and decrees, and to **do everything necessary to build this Temple,** for which I have made these preparations." ²⁰ Then David said to the whole assembly, **"Give praise to the Lord your God!"** And the entire assembly praised the Lord, the God of their ancestors, and they bowed low and knelt before the Lord and the king (1 Chronicles 29:10-20). Cool he! I have no other words. The Kingdom principles in a nutshell, in the Old Testament in David's prayer of praise.

Some more quotes out of the Old Testament: *The LORD is king! He is robed in majesty. Indeed, the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength. The world stands firm and cannot be shaken.* ² *Your throne, O LORD, has stood from time immemorial. You yourself are from the everlasting past (Psalm 93:1-2).* For the LORD is a great God, a great King above all gods (Psalm 95:3). Tell all the nations, "The LORD reigns! (Psalm 96:10). The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all (Psalm 103:19). Bless the LORD, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul! (Psalm 103:22). Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations (Psalm 145:13).

Open the gates of your heart and live for the King of glory: *Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter.* ⁸ *Who is the King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty; the LORD, invincible in battle.* ⁹ *Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter.* ¹⁰ *Who is the King of glory? The LORD of Heaven's Armies—He is the King of glory (Psalm 24:7-10).* Those who stretch out to spiritual thinking are seeing Him in His *basileia* (Kingship, Kingdom) entering their hearts, for His Kingdom is spiritual and within us.

8.11 The Kingdom and the book of Revelation.

To understand next two chapters I would like to go with you through some verses out of the book of Revelation to encourage you to have a maybe different look to this book than you probably had. It's not my word, it is the Scripture, let the Holy Spirit guide you and take your own conclusions.

- *To all who are thirsty (Greek = painfully suffer) I will give freely from the springs of the water of life (Revelation 21:6).* Painfully suffer is not something from the new earth and the new heaven. We won't suffer there, or being thirsty and we don't need life giving water anymore. So, this must be now.
- *I saw no temple in the city, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (Revelation 21:22).* We will see that the city is the bride, the Church, the New Jerusalem, but for now I will emphasize that there is no temple, for the Lamb, Jesus the risen Christ is its temple. This happened already 2000 years ago. See also our study "The Temple replaced".
- *The nations will walk in its light (Revelation 21:24).* The Greek Bible is stating regarding the word "walk": *to walk, to make one's way, progress; to make due use of opportunities, Hebrew for, to live, to regulate one's life, to conduct one's self, to pass one's life.* And regarding the word "nations": *a multitude of individuals of the same nature or genus, in the OT, foreign nations not worshipping the true God, pagans, Gentiles.* This is for sure something for now, for on the new heaven and earth we don't have to be a light (to help them to make progress) for others (not worshipping the true God) to make progress.
- *On each side of the river grew a tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month. The leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations (Revelation 22:2).* About the word "tree" the Greek bible is stating: *as a beam from which any one is suspended, a gibbet, a cross, a log or timber with holes in which the feet, hands, neck of prisoners were inserted and fastened with thongs.* Well, the tree (of life) is the cross of Christ or Jesus Himself. The leaves of this tree are medicine to heal the nations (pagans). This is something for now and not for the new heaven and earth. Nothing has to be healed on the new heaven and earth.

- *Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life.* ¹⁵ *Outside the city are the dogs—the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idol worshippers, and all who love to live a lie (Revelation 22:14-15).* If you was your robe, in the blood of Christ (born again), you have access to the tree of life (Garden of Eden) again, which is logical for Jesus is the Tree. Cool he! This "outside the city are the sinners" is of course for now, they are outside the (spiritual) Kingdom, for on the new heaven and earth all sin and everything that belongs to it, will be banned out.
- ¹⁰ *Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down (Revelation 12:10).* Satan had the legal rights to accuse us, before Jesus took the victory. This came finally to an end at Calvary and the Kingdom has been introduced.

Take your own conclusions regarding the book of Revelation whether it is future stuff or actual for now. It is the book of Revelation – that is, singular – not Revelations. This is important for because it was written to be the revelation of Jesus Christ. It is not a book focussing on the revelation of destructions, nor the revelations of judgements, nor the revelation of the so called antichrist. It is a book revealing Jesus Christ as King and Lord of all. It is written to the Church to encourage us to be victorious and to reign with Him. It is a description of God's kingdom expanding over the whole earth and Jesus Christ being revealed in glory. It is THE REVELATION. See also our study "The end of ages".

The seventh trumpet: The Kingdom proclaimed! ¹⁵ *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"* ¹⁶ *And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God,* ¹⁷ *saying: " We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, because You have taken Your great power and reigned. ¹⁸ The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth."* ¹⁹ *Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail (Revelation 11:15-19).* God has replaced the Temple on earth with a new temple in heaven. The significance of this event can be realized when we recognise that earlier in chapter 11 of Revelation the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed (AD 70). The old Temple was gone. A new Temple was opened. The lighting, thunder, earthquake, and hailstorm mark the changing of authorities. There was a new High Priest in the new Temple. Heaven came on earth, starting as a spiritual Kingdom as written: ² *Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God (Revelation 21:2-3).* See also our study "The Temple replaced".

8.12 The Kingdom and the water from the throne.

They are like trees planted along the riverbank (Psalm 1:3a). This tree is planted and rooted in Him, connected to the source of living water. A tree along the riverside, bearing fruit is also seen in the book of Revelation and Ezekiel. Now I am going to tell you something very challenging and exciting I learned from Ana Méndez Ferrell. Take your time and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to understand it.

And I heard a great voice from the throne out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God

himself shall be with them, and be their God (Revelation 21:3). This prophesy has been accomplished already! When did the Lord come to be among us forever? With Jesus first coming. When Jesus came to the earth wasn't He the holy tabernacle that would live with us forever? Isn't it written that we are the temple (tabernacle) of the Holy Spirit? So He wants to dwell in His holy tabernacle (us) already for more than 2000 years. *All who confess that Jesus is the Son of God have God living (Greek = to remain, abide, to sojourn, to continue to be present) in them, and they live in God (1 John 4:15).*

And he also said, "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty (Greek = to suffer thirst, painfully) I will give freely from the springs of the water (Greek = water from the earth) of life (Revelation 21:6). This last word "life" is explained in the Greek Bible: *life real and genuine, a life active and vigorous, devoted to God, blessed, in the portion **even in this world** of those who put their trust in Christ, but after the resurrection to be consummated by new accessions (among them a more perfect body), and to last forever.* After Jesus second coming there will be no pain and suffering anymore. These verse is applicable from Jesus first coming and will last forever.

¹ *And the angel showed me a pure river with the water of life, clear as crystal, flowing from the throne (Temple or Tabernacle) of God and of the Lamb. ² It flowed down the centre of the main street. On each side of the river grew a tree (Greek = a cross, a log or timber with holes in which the feet, hands, neck of prisoners were inserted and fastened with thongs) of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, with a fresh crop each month. The fruit will be for food and the leaves were used for medicine to heal the nations (Greek = foreign nations not worshipping the true God, pagans, gentiles). (Revelation 22:1-2 and Ezekiel 47:12).* First, have a look at Matthew 11:13: *For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John (Matthew 11:13 NKJV).* But if you read the books of the Prophets and God's Law closely, you will see them culminate in John, teaming up with him in preparing the way for the Messiah of the kingdom (Matthew 11:13 The Message). The Greek bible is teaching us were this is all about: *especially concerning future events, and in particular such as relate to the cause and kingdom of God and to human salvation.* This is also confirmed in next verse: *"The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it (Luke 16:16).* The prophesies about the Kingdom and human salvation are ending with John, we see them culminate in John's century. We have seen this fulfilled with the first coming of Jesus the Christ, where He took the victory at Calvary (our salvation), which is also the start of the Kingdom, all during the days of John. As a consequence those prophesies (also of Ezekiel 47:12) are fulfilled at that time in the first century. As we follow the Greek Bible we conclude following: The tree of life is the power of the cross of Christ (or Christ Himself) and the leaves are mend to heal the nations (those who did not yet bow down for the King of Kings).

¹⁴ *Blessed are those who wash their robes. They will be permitted to enter through the gates of the city and eat the fruit from the tree of life. ¹⁵ Outside the city are the dogs—the sorcerers, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idol worshipers, and all who love to live a lie. (Revelation 22:14-15).* Cool he! Once you wash your robes (entered the Kingdom) you have access again to the tree of life from the Garden of Eden!! This is about Jesus first coming, for after His second coming (on the new heaven and earth) there will be no sinners outside the city. By the way the city is the new Jerusalem, which is the Church, the bride (Revelation 21:9) as also written: *No, **you have come** to Mount Zion, **to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and...** (Hebrews 12:22).*

Your life giving water is directly flowing from the throne (Temple or Tabernacle) of God and of the Lamb. So, now you became His holy temple, your water should flow from you to the nations, to the Republic of South Africa as written: *Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart' (John 7:38).* You became a water transfer station. And there is more! You are a tree, you have access to the tree of life again, and your leaves are used for medicine to

heal the nations, the Republic of South Africa. Connected to the wrong source? No leaves, no healing of South Africa! **To which source are you connected? Kingdom citizens are bearing fruit under every circumstance!**

8.13 The Kingdom and the "end of ages".

But now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9:26b). Look back into the future and be amazed what happened **2000 years ago, at the end of the ages!** It is not fair, realising what Jesus has done 2000 years ago, to neglect the perfection of His finished work. Religion postpones several things to a future experience. But you must remember that you cannot appropriate what you postpone. Experience, explore, apply, practice, and enjoy living with the benefits, promises, and privileges of Heaven on earth.

The Bible teaches us that the 'end of time' has begun at the beginning of our era, actually all next verses happened 2000 years ago, in the first century:

- *But now, once **at the end of the ages**, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9:26).*
- *Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, **upon whom the ends of the ages have come** (1 Corinthians 10:11).*
- *But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass **in the last days**, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh (Acts 2:16-17). The Pentecost, 2000 years ago.*
- *But when **the fullness of the time had come**, God sent forth His Son (Galatians 4: 4).*
- *Little children, **it is the last hour**; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, **even now many antichrists have come**, by which **we know that it is the last hour** (1 John 2:18). Many antichrists, already in the first century, called the last hour.*
- *Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of **the fullness of the times** He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him (Ephesians 1:9-10). **Heaven on earth in Christ, 2000 years ago!***

Hollywood has produced many fear driven so called future "end time" movies with horror scenarios inspired by the book of Revelation and the word "apocalypse". Some Christians follow this fear driven behaviour and keep themselves and others busy with similar future topics. But, why for instance so busy with the antichrist? Jesus took the victory 2000 years ago, it is fixed, so what antichrist? In 1 John 2 there is no fear at all regarding the antichrist and John is simply confirming: *But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things (1 John 2:20).* That's it. Look back into the future, and believe in the perfection of His finished work, 2000 years ago, at the end of ages! It is all about Jesus! In this context some more words about the book of Revelation:

1. It is the book of **Revelation** (singular) **of Christ** (Rev.1:1), The One Who took the victory, and not the revelations (plural) of disasters.
2. The word revelation in Greek is *ap-ok-al'-oop-sis* which we know as apocalypse. This word has nothing to do with disaster, however means: a revelation of the truth, which was unknown until that time. That's it! What a manmade fear driven theory around the word apocalypse. No instead it is the apocalypse (Revelation) of Jesus, your Savior and King, Who's perfect love expels all fear.
3. *Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near (Revelation 1:3).* The reading of the book of Revelation is a blessing to us and not a horror scenario.

It is Amazing and beyond every human imagination **what He realized for us, 2000 years ago, at the end of ages:** *But now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared*

to **put away sin** by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9:26). Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God (Ephesians 2:19). And raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6). But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel (Hebrews 12:22-24). Are you still with me? We, right now, in the same dwelling as the saints, the angels and Jesus, on the Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem! In this dwelling place every spiritual blessing is waiting for us: *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).*

Please do not underestimate the work of Jesus with His first coming and make Him unintended to a caricature. The changing and big marking point in History has happened in the first century, called the last hour, at the end of the ages. Put the different stories from the Scripture on the right place of the time axe. Look back, into the future, at the end of ages and enjoy and inherit that what belongs to you in Jesus the risen Christ. **You are seated in heavenly places!**

8.14 The Kingdom and “the sings of the times”.

The word “**signs of the times**” is only appearing in Matthew 16: *You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times (Matthew 16:3).* This is only dealing about the sign of Jonah: *A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah (Matthew 16:4).* This is about the dying and resurrection of Jesus: *But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (Matthew 12:39-40).* **We always thought this sign was close before Jesus second coming, however it is about His first coming.**

We automatically made a link with the sings in Matthew 24:1-31 (false messiah’s, wars and rumors of wars), but “*the signs of the times*” is not appearing at all here.

Matthew 24:1-31.

The disciples are asking Jesus three questions:

1. *Tell us, when will these things be? (Matthew 24:3a).*
2. *And what will be the sign of Your coming? (Matthew 24:3b).*
3. *and of the end of the age? (Matthew 24:3c).*

Answer question 1 (Matthew 24:4-28):

Jesus predicts **the destruction of the temple** in Matthew 24:1-2 and answers their question: *Tell us, when will these things be?* The answer is: *Assuredly, I say to you, **this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place** (Matthew 24:34).* We all know this actually happened in their generation: Jerusalem and the Temple are destroyed in A.D.70, **in their generation.**

Answer question 2 (Matthew 24:29-35):

And what will be the sign of Your coming? When people read that question today, they have a very different mind-set than the disciples had 2000 years ago. They were not thinking of the second coming of our Lord. In fact, at that time in their lives they were not even convinced that Jesus was going to die (Matthew 16:21-23), let alone return to earth someday. Let’s have a look on what means His “coming”. At that time in history, the Jews were looking for a Messiah. That was there primary hope. They were looking for a Messiah to come and set up a Kingdom in which the Jews would have dominance on earth and reign forever (Matthew 20:20-23). So, there question was

meant: When will You come into your Kingdom, when will You take Your position and reveal yourself as king! When did that happen? After Jesus died, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, He sat down on a throne at the right hand of God. All authority was given to Him, both in heaven and earth. Jesus came into His Kingdom the moment He ascended into heaven and sat down next to the Father. It happened almost 2,000 years ago, **in the generation in which the disciples lived** as written: *And I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom (Matthew 16:28) and Jesus went on to say, I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God arrive in great power! (Mark 9:1). This is all about the sign of His coming in His Kingdom!*

The kingdom of God has come upon us with Jesus first coming (Matthew 12:28). The Kingdom of God is spiritual and not of this world (John 18:36). Jesus became King with His first coming as written: He would raise up the Christ to sit on the throne of David (Acts 2:29-34), to fulfill the prophesy of the prophet Zechariah: Tell the daughter of Zion, behold, your King is coming to you (Matthew 21:5). With Jesus second coming His reign and Kingdom will end and be handed over to the Father: Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. (1 Corinthians 15:24).

*Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30). Some more words about 'the clouds' with Jesus ascending into heaven here. The prophet Daniel is also speaking about this happening: I was watching in the night visions, and behold, **One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed (Daniel 7:13-14).** Daniel is clearly speaking about the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven, which means coming to God the Father, to sit on the throne and have dominion, glory and a Kingdom. This is about the ascending into heaven during Jesus first coming and the start of the spiritual Kingdom. Next verse confirms that 'coming on the clouds': *Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight (Acts 1:9).**

Answer question 3 (Matthew 24:36-44):

What will be the sign of the end of the age? Well, this is about Jesus return, His second coming. *But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming (Matthew 24:36-42).* As we see here **no signs precede the second coming of Jesus!**

Final word signs of the times.

*Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that **summer is near**. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! (Matthew 24:32-33).* Jesus is explaining His disciples here that these warning signs would signal the beginning of a new spiritual season – the end of the old age and the flourishing of a new one with a new covenant. Jesus was answering His disciples questions about His coming Kingdom – an event that they would see in their lifetime. Look at Jesus, the new High Priest: *Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens (Hebrews 8:1).* In Matthew 24:36 Jesus

speaks about His second coming and that **with His second coming there will be no signs** to indicate His second coming. The obvious, simple lesson of the fig tree was to watch all the signs listed in Matthew 24:4-29.

All the signs in Matthew 24:4-29, including the great tribulation, **took place** during the start of the 'end of ages', 2000 years ago, **in the first century**. This all during their lifetime as written: *Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till **all these things take place** (Matthew 24:34)*. The 'end of ages' started with Jesus first coming: *but now, once **at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself** (Hebrews 9:26)*.

8.15 The Temple replaced.

Actually we are talking here about God's house, the place where He is living, where He wants to live, His dwelling place. During the old covenant the house of the Lord was a house of stone: *And the temple, when it was being built, was built with Stone ... (1 Kings 6:7)*. It was a visible, holy place for this world, with laws and requirements for this world (the flesh). These requirements were applicable until the time of the new temple: ¹ *That first covenant between God and Israel had regulations for worship and a place of worship here on earth.* ⁹ *This is an illustration pointing to the present time. For the gifts and sacrifices that the priests offer are not able to cleanse the consciences of the people who bring them.* ¹⁰ *For that old system deals only with food and drink and various cleansing ceremonies—physical regulations that were in effect only until a better system could be established (Hebrews 9:1, 9-10).*

The new Temple, in the new covenant, with a new High Priest, Jesus the Christ, has been made of living stones as written: *And **you are living stones** that God is building into his **spiritual temple**. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.* ⁶ *As the Scriptures say, "I am placing a cornerstone in Jerusalem, chosen for great honor, and anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced."* (1 Peter 2:5-6). Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ *having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,* ²¹ *in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,* ²² *in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Ephesians 2:19-22).* **You are the new Temple, you are the living stones, and He wants to dwell in you as His new Temple, His new (spiritual) Jerusalem! But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation (Hebrews 9:11). No, **you have come** to Mount Zion, **to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and...** (Hebrews 12:22).**

Next explanation is also explaining this Temple story (old to new covenant) and the physical impact of this spiritual war on earth: **The seventh trumpet: The Kingdom proclaimed!** ¹⁵ *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world **have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!**"* ¹⁶ *And the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and worshiped God,* ¹⁷ *saying: "We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was and who is to come, because **You have taken Your great power and reigned.**"* ¹⁸ *The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great, and should destroy those who destroy the earth."* ¹⁹ *Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. **And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail** (Revelation 11:15-19).* God has replaced the Temple on earth with a new temple in heaven. The significance of this event can be realized when we recognise that earlier in chapter 11 of Revelation the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed (AD 70). The old Temple was gone. A new Temple was opened. The lighting,

thunder, earthquake, and hailstorm mark the changing of authorities. There was a new High Priest in the new Temple. Heaven came on earth, starting as a spiritual Kingdom as written: ² *Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* ³ *And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God (Revelation 21:2-3).* When Jesus took the victory at Calvary there were also earthquakes etc. On earth to mark the change in authority. See also our study "The Temple replaced".

9. Heavenly places.

The Kingdom of Heaven (or Kingdom of God) is not the same thing as heaven. When the New Testament uses the phrase "the Kingdom of Heaven" it is not referring to heaven. Instead it is referring to the Millennial Kingdom which has been ordained from heaven, that is, from God. The Kingdom of Heaven" and "Heaven" are not the same. The Kingdom of Heaven is a kingdom from heaven, not a kingdom in heaven. God reigns supreme in heaven. Heaven is the locus of His authority – the point from which He rules the universe. The words "of heaven" then are referring to the origin of this Kingdom. It is the place from which the Kingdom is coming, not a destination to which we are going. So we see that although the Kingdom of Heaven is heavenly in character and origin, it is not the same thing as heaven. The Kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:21). **So, the Kingdom of God is not an actual place, but rather the right or authority to rule with royal power. The Kingdom is a way of living, it is the manifestation of heaven on earth within you and through you.**

Please allow me to go through the different heavenly places by the Greek Bible.

1. *Our Father in **heaven** (Matthew 6:9): οὐρανός, n {oo-ran-os'}, the vaulted expanse of the sky with all things visible in it, the universe, the world, the aerial heavens or sky, the region where the clouds and the tempests gather, and where thunder and lightning are produced, the sidereal or starry heavens, the region above the sidereal heavens, the seat of order of things eternal and consummately perfect where God dwells and other heavenly beings. So, God the Father arts in heaven (the upper region or some call it the third heaven).*
2. *And raised us up together, and made us sit together in the **heavenly places** in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:6): ἐπουράνιος, a {ep-oo-ran'-ee-os}, existing in heaven, things that take place in heaven, the heavenly regions, heaven itself, the abode of God and angels, the lower heavens, of the stars, the heavens, of the clouds, the heavenly temple or sanctuary, of heavenly origin or nature. We, who are still in our earthly body, are with our spiritual part (soul) in the lower heavens (first Heaven).*
3. *But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the **kingdom** of God has come upon you (Matthew 12:28): βασιλεία, n {bas-il-i'-ah}, royal power, kingship, dominion, rule, not to be confused with an actual kingdom but rather the right or authority to rule over a kingdom, of the royal power of Jesus as the triumphant Messiah, of the royal power and dignity conferred on Christians in the Messiah's kingdom, a kingdom, the territory subject to the rule of a king, used in the N.T. to refer to the reign of the Messiah. The Kingdom of God, the royal power to reign with the Messiah, the risen Christ, in the spiritual Kingdom, during the whole NT period!*
4. *And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the **tabernacle** of God is with men, (Revelation 21:3): σκηνή, n {skay-nay'}, tent, tabernacle, (made of green boughs, or skins or other materials), of that well known movable temple of God after the pattern of which the temple at Jerusalem was built. In the OT God's glory was in the tabernacle. In the NT Jesus came to dwell (tabernacle) in us as the NT tabernacle and filling us with God's glory again (Colossians 2:9-10)! Already for more than 2000 years!*
5. *Come, I will show you the **bride**, the Lamb's wife." (Revelation 21:9): νύμφη, n {noom-fay'}, a betrothed woman, a bride, a recently married woman, young wife, a young woman, a daughter-in-law. The bride is betrothed or engaged. The first*

official stage of a marriage. The bride is the Church of all ages engaged with Jesus the Christ more than 2000 years ago. Verse 10 of Revelation 21 is giving more information regarding this bride, the Church: *And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me **the great city**, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, (Revelation 21:10): πόλις, ἡ {pol'-is}, a city, one's native city, the city in which one lives, the heavenly Jerusalem, the abode of the blessed in heaven, of the visible capital in the heavenly kingdom, to come down to earth after the renovation of the world by fire, the inhabitants of a city.* Newborn people, born from above, from the heavens, the Church, **the New Jerusalem** coming down to earth 2000 years ago as a spiritual Kingdom and at the very end, *after the renovation of the world by fire, the visible capital in the heavenly kingdom.* Psalm 122 is giving a nice view on Jerusalem (a song for pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem): ¹ *I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."* ² *And now here we are, standing inside your gates, O Jerusalem.* ³ *Jerusalem is a well-built city; its seamless walls cannot be breached. All the tribes of Israel—the LORD's people—make their pilgrimage here. They come to give thanks to the name of the LORD, as the law requires of Israel.* ⁵ *Here stand the thrones where judgment is given, the thrones of the dynasty of David.* ⁶ *Pray for peace in Jerusalem. May all who love this city prosper.* ⁷ *O Jerusalem, may there be peace within your walls and prosperity in your palaces.* ⁸ *For the sake of my family and friends, I will say, "May you have peace."* ⁹ *For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek what is best for you, O Jerusalem (Psalm 122).* This all is applicable in the Old Testament, in the New Testament and on the new heaven and earth.

6. *And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. (Revelation 20:4): βασιλεύω, ν {bas-il-yoo'-o}, to be king, to exercise kingly power, to reign, of the governor of a province, of the rule of the Messiah, of the reign of Christians in the millennium, metaph. to exercise the highest influence, to control.* It is interesting to see that the same Greek word has been used for "Kingdom" and "reigned" in the Greek Bible, to rule with royal power with the Messiah, the risen King. The Kingdom has come with Jesus first coming (Matthew 12:28), so these thousand years starting with Jesus first coming and ending with His second coming. This is the same period that Satan, our opponent is in the pit (Revelation 20:3, more information in our study "Know your enemy"), which is logical, there is only one King, the King of Kings, Jesus the Christ, the GREAT I AM, the NAME ABOVE ALL NAMES, the Messiah! See also our study "satan securely chained". Regarding "thousand" the Scripture is giving some more information: *A single day in your courts is better than a thousand anywhere else (Psalm 84:10)! A thousand years here is mend for a long period. But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day (2 Peter 3:8).* This is about the second coming of Jesus. Peter is explaining that the long period of waiting for the humans (the whole Kingdom period), seems to be long in our view, however the Lord is patient and needs this time to get as much as humans on board. At the end of this spiritual Kingdom of thousand years, with Jesus second coming, Jesus will hand over the Kingdom to the Father and that will be the start of the new heaven and new earth in its full glory, finally the visible Kingdom again, as written: *Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power (1 Corinthians 15:24).*

Heavenly places are real. They are glorious dwellings of infinite revelation. It is the will of God that we enter them, that we be established there, and that we govern with Him from the heavens, while we live here on earth.

And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth. (Revelation 5:10).

10. Final destination

We are on our way towards God's perfect dealings. We, the Church do have a perfect message for the world: **Heaven on earth, the Kingdom of God!** We are able to taste the maturity of the (spiritual) Kingdom already here on earth and serve this beautiful Rainbow Nation. However, we are still on our way for that future day (Romans 8:19). There will be a new heaven and a new earth and we will have a new body. But one thing is already fixed: we are citizens of Heaven and the death of this earthly body isn't changing anything about that.

*¹⁸ Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later. ¹⁹ For all creation is waiting eagerly for that future day when God will reveal who his children really are. ²⁰ Against its will, all creation was subjected to God's curse. But with eager hope, ²¹ the creation looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. ²² For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³ And we believers also groan, even though **we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory**, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children including the new bodies he has promised us. ²⁴ We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it. ²⁵ But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently. (Romans 8:18-25).*

*If we endure hardship, **we will reign with him**. If we deny him, he will deny us (2 Timothy 2:12). Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me (Philippians 3:12).*

*²⁰ He who is the faithful witness to all these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon!" **Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!** ²¹ May the grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's holy people (Revelation 22:20-21).*

11. Growing into maturity of the Kingdom.

For many are called, but few are chosen (Matthew 22:14). The word "called" in the Greek Bible: κλητός, a {klay-tos'}, called, invited (to a banquet), invited (by God in the proclamation of the Gospel) to obtain eternal salvation in the kingdom through Christ 1b) called to (the discharge of) some office, divinely selected and appointed. Well, this is clear, many are called in the proclamation of the Gospel. The word "chosen" in the Greek Bible: ἐκλεκτός, a {ek-lek-tos'}, picked out, chosen, chosen by God, to obtain salvation through Christ, Christians are called "chosen or elect" of God, the Messiah in called "elect", as appointed by God to the most exalted office conceivable, choice, select, i.e. the best of its kind or class, excellence preeminent: applied to certain individual Christians. The first part of this explanation is about our salvation, which is by grace. The second part is applied to certain individual Christians, which is growing into the maturity of the Kingdom already here on earth (may be this is the difference between followers and discipleship).

If we have a look on the punishment of those who are not willing to come on this wedding feast (or without wedding clothes) in Matthew 22:1-14, something interesting is arising. *Cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 22:13).* This is not the final punishment of the lake of fire, for this is described as follows: *and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire (Greek = to set on fire, light, burning, to burn, consume with fire) and brimstone, which is the second death (Revelation 21:8).* No, this "outer darkness" is the place here on earth outside the Kingdom of God, outside the city, the New Jerusalem. Of course there is darkness, for Jesus Himself is the light, but that light is not outside the city. See also our study "Intruders on Gods Kingdom".

We can be born again, which is be written in the book of life, which means a passport for eternal life after leaving our earthly body. However if we want to taste more of the Kingdom life, already here on earth in this earthly body, we have to do something, we have to shoulder our cross. We have to take on our wedding garment or clothes (Matthew 22:12), which are our good deeds for God as written: *And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints (Revelation 19:8)*. Amazing he, **the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints**. So by doing our good deeds for God here on earth we are producing the fine linen in heaven, our wedding garment to enter into the maturity of the Kingdom already here on earth.

This two step approach is also confirmed in next verses: ¹¹ *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* ¹² *Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,* ¹³ *each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.* ¹⁴ *If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.* ¹⁵ *If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)*. No other foundation than Jesus the Christ, which is our salvation. After that we have to build on this foundation our works (second step). No works that can stand the fire? You are still saved (but as through fire), but a miserable life here on earth, and probably no fruit. In that case: CU later guys. This confirms also that **the Kingdom is for now and for this earth!** If this is your case than you will only first taste the maturity of the Kingdom after your death, you will miss the Kingdom benefits here in your walk on this earth and you are not bringing other fellow South Africans into His Kingdom. Don't you love your fellow South African brothers and sisters? **No, instead bear fruit that remains, works that can stand the fire, and take it as a reward with you into heaven, your works will follow you! We love you Lord, we love you beautiful Rainbow Nation!**

Most of the other parables regarding the Kingdom are about entering into the maturity of the Kingdom already here on earth, and are not about our salvation. For instance in the parable of the hidden treasure and the pearl the man sold everything (shouldered his cross, giving up his securities, possessions, etc.) he owned to get enough money to buy the field. (Matthew 13:44).

Another example of growing into maturity:

"Someone asked Jesus in Matthew 19: What good deed must I do to have eternal life? Jesus answered this question: keep the commandments. Which ones? the man asked. Jesus replied: You must ... I've obeyed all these commandments, the young man replied. What else must I do? Jesus told him: If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me. But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions. Then Jesus said to his disciples, I tell you the truth, it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 19:16-23)". This man is asking two different questions and is receiving two different answers.

The first question is about salvation: What must I do to have eternal life? Because this man was living before the victory of Jesus at the mighty cross, the law and the prophets were still applicable, and the answer was: Keep the commandments. The answer for today is: Believe in Me and you will have eternal life as written: "God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it (Ephesians 2:8-9)". The first question is answered, this man has fulfilled the conditions, and has eternal life (his salvation is secure), which is only based on believe, 100% grace and not based on one single work from our side.

The second question is another one in addition: What else must I do? The answer is: If you want to be perfect, ... This question is not about salvation at all. Jesus is not judging

this man regarding his decision but only suggesting him how to be perfect in addition to his salvation. As a result the consequences **"it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven" are also not about salvation.** See also our study "Intruders in Gods Kingdom".

The Kingdom of heaven came with Jesus first coming, is spiritual and has many advantages, already in this very life. You will be placed outside the spiritual Kingdom in this very life if you say no to question number two, which is based on our works, to prove your faith and your thankfulness for your salvation. However salvation, eternal life in the world to come is based only on Grace and not on our works. Never mix that. In Matthew 22:12-13 Jesus is sending a guest outside the Kingdom because he has no wedding dress. The wedding dress represents the good deeds of God's holy people' (Revelation 19:6-8). So, you are producing your own wedding dress with your own good works (saying yes to question 2), building on the foundation, and by doing this you have already the right in this very life to experience, explore, apply, practice, and enjoy living with the benefits, promises, and privileges of Heaven on earth (the spiritual Kingdom). Get dressed and enjoy the party! Jesus calls this man "friend", which is logical, for this man got saved, however had not the right to experience the Kingdom benefits already in this very life, because of his own choice for question number two. Another reason to know that this story in Matthew 22 is on this side of life: do you really believe that on the new heaven and new earth burglars are present in the Kingdom? No way! Again: **Get dressed and enjoy the party already here on earth!**

Please, never ever exclude anyone from eternal life based on human works. Thank You Lord for saving me only by grace and not because I was one of those five out of ten who had enough oil for my lamp (human works).

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me....
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now, I see.

12. Reign now!

My beloved brothers and sisters, many Christians do believe that we receive the crown to reign starting with the second coming of Christ or after the pre-rapture, but this is what Satan wants us to believe, which makes the church so powerless. *For your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. You rule throughout all generations. The Lord always keeps his promises; He is gracious in all he does. (Psalm 145:13).* The rule and Kingdom of our Lord, Jesus the Christ (and we with Him) doesn't stop (or has a break) between His first coming and the so called pre-rapture. **Reign, now!** Don't let it happen on the final day: sorry Lord I forgot to reign, I wasn't aware. ***I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take away your crown*** (Greek = a mark of royal or exalted rank) (Revelation 3:11). Jesus is referring here to His second coming, so in the meantime here on earth: **Let no one take away your crown!** This is not your salvation, for that is fixed, that can't be taken away from you.

This is also the case with the words "To everyone who is victorious," in the book of Revelation. Satan wants us to believe this is after Christ's second coming. This is not true! Have a look with me:

- *To all who are victorious, who obey me to the very end, To them I will give authority over all the nations. They will rule the nations with an iron rod and smash them like clay pots. They will have the same authority I received from my Father, and I will also give them the morning star! (Revelation 2:26-28).* Are you obeying Him? You are victorious! When? Now! What else for should the nations be ruled? After the second coming of Christ everything is sorted out, no need for us to rule anymore. We will have the same authority as Jesus received from His Father!
- *Because you have obeyed my command to persevere, I will protect you from the great time of testing that will come upon the whole world to test those who*

belong to this world. I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take away your crown. All who are victorious will become pillars in the Temple of my God, and they will never have to leave it. And I will write on them the name of my God, and they will be citizens in the city of my God—the new Jerusalem that comes down from heaven from my God. And I will also write on them my new name (Revelation 3:10-12). It starts with obeying again. This is essential! And then my dear friends: **I will protect you from the great time of testing that will come upon the whole world.** Many Christians are avoiding the book of Revelation also with fear for the great testing, but we are protected. **The book of Revelation is not something what should scare us (this is what Satan wants us to believe) but the book of Revelation is the revelation of Christ, the revelation to train us to be victorious till the end, the revelation to train us to be kings, the revelation to the Church to reign with Christ.** Have a look at Revelation 1:3 "God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near". It is a message to the church and there is a blessing if you read it and there is a blessing if you obey it. Well, obeying is an action, so **Reign, Now!**

- *Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends.* ²¹ *Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne (Revelation 3:20-21).* Are you still with me? Are you aware what's going on here? This is the ultimate! Jesus is knocking at the door of the church, those whose salvation is secure! He is begging them to open the door, begging us to grow into the maturity of the Kingdom! We are the church, so open your door, have intimate contact with Him (stay connected with the true vine) as a friend, **sit with Him on the throne, be victorious and reign.**

*For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph (will reign in life) over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:17). **And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.** (Revelation 5:10).*

*If we endure, **We shall also reign with Him** (2 Timothy 2:12).* The Greek word for reign here is: *συμβασιλεύω,ν* \{soom-bas-il-yoo'-o\}, 1) to reign together 2) metaph. to possess supreme honor, liberty, blessedness, with one in the kingdom of God. It is interesting to see that this word reign contains the Greek Kingdom word: *βασιλεία,η* \{bas-il-i'-ah\}. And yes, there is a price tag: **If we endure!** (to remain, to tarry behind, to remain i.e. abide, not recede or flee, to preserve: under misfortunes and trials to hold fast to one's faith in Christ, to endure, bear bravely and calmly: ill treatments).

13. How to practice the Kingdom in your very life?

Well, beside everything what is already written in this study and what you knew already about the Kingdom is applicable in your very lives. In addition I would like to add next verse: **For the Kingdom of God is not just a lot of talk; it is living by God's power** (1 Corinthians 4:20). Some people talk a lot about faith, but that's all it is – talk. They may know all the right words to say, but their lives don't reflect God's power. Paul says that the Kingdom of God is to be **lived**, not just discussed. Don't be content to have the right answer about Christ. Let your life show that God's power is really working in you. How is this power being manifested in our lives:

- *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, **preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people** (Matthew 4:23).*
- *For you have been called to **live in freedom**, not freedom to satisfy your sinful nature, but freedom to **serve one another in love** (Galatians 5:13).*
- *No, despite all these things, **overwhelming victory is ours** through Christ, who loved us. (Romans 8:37). **Know your position in Christ Jesus!***

- And now you are united with the one who was raised from the dead. As a result, you can **produce good fruit**, that is, good deeds for God (Romans 7:4).
- So you also should **consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and able to live for the glory of God** through Christ Jesus (Romans 6:11).
- ²⁸ But **there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets**, and he has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in the future.... ³⁰ And it is not because I am wiser than anyone else that I know the secret of your dream, but because **God wanted you to understand what was in your heart**. (what you were thinking about) (Daniel 2:28-30). Stretch out to understand His will for your life. **Christians don't have to grope around in the dark, hoping to stumble upon answers!** A Christian is not spending too much time in understanding His will for **we know these things** because God has revealed them to us by his Spirit, and his Spirit searches everything and shows us even God's deep secrets. (1 Corinthians 2:10). Christians **obey** His will and spend their time and energy in **walking in Faith and bearing fruit!** Those who **obey** my commandments **are the ones who love me**. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and **reveal myself to each one of them.**" (John 14:21).
- May the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and **peace** as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by **the power of the Holy Spirit** (Romans 15:13).
- Instead, be kind to each other, tender-hearted, **forgiving one another**, just as God through Christ has forgiven you (Ephesians 4:32).
- We are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against the evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world (Ephesians 6:12). **Know your enemy!**
- The Kingdom flag: **Yahweh-nissi, "The Lord is my banner"** (Exodus 17:15).
- At the very moment they began to **sing and give praise**, the LORD caused the armies of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir to start fighting among themselves (2 Chronicles 20:22). **Praise causes God's action.**
- You can **pray for anything**, and **if you have faith, you will receive it.**" (Matthew 21:22).
- **Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received!** (Matthew 10:8).
- **The Holy Spirit is the power of God:** And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you (Luke 1:35). But you shall **receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you** (Acts 1:8).
- ¹⁷ And **these signs will follow those who believe:** In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; ¹⁸ they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover (Mark 16:17-18).
- **I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead.** I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, ¹¹ so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead! (Philippians 3:10-11).
- For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but **righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit** (Romans 14:17). Because of His Kingship in us we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Romans 8:37). We shout: **But thank God! He has made us his captives and continues to lead us along in Christ's triumphal procession** (2 Corinthians 2:14). The heavenly Kingdom is entering within us, now, as a spiritual power!
- God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs (Matthew 5:3). God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs (Matthew 5:10).
- Etc.

14. A call to glorious living.

Is anyone thirsty? **Come and drink— even if you have no money!** Come, take your choice of wine or milk— **it's all free!** **Listen carefully to Me**, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance. You will enjoy the finest food. Come to me with your ears wide open. Listen, and you will find life. **Because I, the Lord your God, the**

Holy One of Israel, have made you glorious. You will live in joy and peace. The mountains and hills will burst into song, and the trees of the field will clap their hands! Where once there were thorns, cypress trees will grow. Where nettles grew, myrtles will sprout up. These events will bring great honour to the Lord's name; they will be an everlasting sign of His power and love (Isaiah 55). In that day you will sing: I will praise You, O Lord! You were angry with me, but not anymore. Now You comfort me. See, God has come to save me. I will trust in Him and not be afraid. The Lord God is my strength and my song; He has given me victory. With joy you will drink deeply from the fountain of salvation! In that wonderful day you will sing: Thank the Lord! Praise His name! Tell the nations what He has done. Let them know how mighty He is! Sing to the Lord, for He has done wonderful things. Make known His praise around the world. Let all the people of Jerusalem shout His praise with joy! For great is the Holy One of Israel Who lives among you (Isaiah 12). I almost made everything bold here. Have you noticed "With joy you will drink deeply from the fountain of salvation!". Again we see in this context that salvation is the first step and than building on it (the maturity of the Kingdom on earth), or in this context: **drink deeply from the fountain of salvation!** Last thing in these beautiful call: All this free blessings the Lord so dearly loves to give us is bringing great honour to the Lord's name and they will be an everlasting sign of His power and love. Cool he!! **It's all about His name.**

15. Straight from my heart!

Dear friends, beloved and fellow South Africans. My governor in Heaven has called me to do something for this beautiful Rainbow Nation. Our ministry is to train the Church in the Republic of South Africa to enter into the maturity of the spiritual Kingdom of God here on earth, to understand and experience the awesome love and power of God and to identify and destroy the powers of darkness. Our Lord Jesus is much more than a Saviour, He is also our Deliverer and King. The Bible is teaching us that something is happening in the dark spiritual realm and this has a work out in the physical world, also here in this beautiful nation. My passion is to identify this dark power specifically for the Republic of South Africa and lead you in the process how to destroy it (by God's power). This will bring happiness and relief in your physical (seen) world. In this study some phrases are used from the book "*Kingdom Principles: Preparing for Kingdom Experience and Expansion*" from the hand of dr. Myles Munroe. I would love to share some words out of this be gifted speaker's video presentations:

The priority of Jesus Christ is the Kingdom, Jesus never preached "born again". Jesus mentioned born again once and He never spoke it to a crowd of people. He only spoke it to one man and that man was a religious leader. The man's question was important. How do I enter the Kingdom? We keep preaching what Jesus never preached. His priority was Matthew 6:33 "*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*". How many times is this preached in our Bible schools or in your Church? **But He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent."** (Luke 4:43). Jesus never spoke about Calvary in public, only privately with His disciples. Publicly He preached the Kingdom. Calvary is not the gospel. We are teaching our own messages. Most of the theology that the world of Christendom is filled with God knows nothing about. Religious people don't want you to hear this message, they shut it up. My assignment is a very difficult assignment. For I have got a deal, first of all with the Church, and pastors will kill me. Jesus never had opposition or a problem with sinners. His greatest opposition was..... religious people. He says you lock it up. Matthew 24:13 "*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.*" **This** means, I know that there are many others that are preaching, but this (the gospel of the Kingdom) is a testimony against Buddha, New age etc. Don't preach Christianity, preach the Kingdom. That's where they are hungry for, for they have already a religion. The end of the world is here in our hands, and depending on our preaching of the Kingdom. Well, we have a long track to go. So, could it be that the Church is holding Him back, because we are preaching our own stuff? So, the end is depending on what you preach. So, stop prophesying to the people that the end of the

world is coming soon. This all is the answer on the question “**when is the end of the world coming**”. When you guys preach this message (of the Kingdom) to the end of the world, **then I come**. When your denominations and your Church traditions become more important than His instructions you have no reason for existence. In the Kingdom citizens are not fighting but the angels are fighting on our behalf. In a Kingdom the government is sending His army to protect your property. *Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? (Matthew 26:53)*. Not believers, but angels. I don't need believers to defend me, I got an army in my country! Do you know that a legion is 6000 soldiers (72.000 angels!), and only one angel destroyed pharaohs army!!! You are safe! The only problem for angels is, they work for you, you have to give them instructions. Cause you are there boss. *Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14)*. That's why your house is broken into, because you left home and didn't leave instructions!!! Thank you great Governor.
Myles Munroe.

I was asking myself: can I write these words of Myles Munroe in my own study “Calvary is not the gospel”? I am sure Myles Munroe properly appreciates the work of Jesus at the mighty cross, however it is all about: “Yes,” *Jesus replied, “and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, ³⁰ will be repaid many times over in this life, and will have eternal life in the world to come.” (Luke 18:29-30)*. Jesus is the door as written: ***I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture (John 10:9)***. This is all about the question: do you keep staying in the doorway (with the mighty cross), or are you going in and out in the city (the new Jerusalem, the Kingdom) and find pasture, already here on earth!

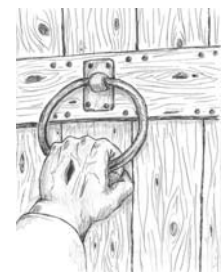
16. Angels in Gods Kingdom.

While reading this “angels story” of Myles Munroe in previous chapter something arises within me. Did you know following verse out of the scripture : ***At that time Michael, the archangel who stands guard over your nation, will arise (Daniel 12:1)***. **Help, angels unemployed:** *Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14)*. Angels are working for us, but we have to give them instructions. So if we call upon our God for His angels to help us *He sends His angels like the winds, His servants like flames of fire (Hebrews 1:7)*. Consider next verse with me: ⁹ ***If you make the LORD your refuge, if you make the Most High your shelter, ¹⁰ no evil will conquer you; no plague will come near your home. ¹¹ For he will order his angels to protect you wherever you go (Psalm 91:9-11)***. Consider the last phrase regarding angels: ¹² ***Then he said, “Don't be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer. ¹³ But for twenty-one days the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia blocked my way. Then Michael, one of the archangels came to help me, and I left him there with the spirit prince of the kingdom of Persia. ¹⁴ Now I am here to explain what will happen to your people in the future, for this vision concerns a time yet to come (Daniel 10:12-14)***. Are you still with me? From the first day Daniel started to pray, this angel went immediately on his way to Daniel, however he had severe resistance in the (dark) spiritual realm and the archangel Michael came to help him. Our humble prayer causes actions by angels in the spiritual realm for our sake here on earth!

The angels, at your service.

17. Party time!

Look! I stand at the door and knock. If you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in, and we will share a meal together as friends. ²¹ Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne (Revelation 3:20-21). My dear friends, this is an invitation to the Church, you know, those who got



saved. It is a bit painful and I feel a bit ashamed that my Savior who saved me is knocking at my door. Apparently He is standing outside. Or am I standing outside, on the wrong side? This is an invitation not to stop with the mighty cross, a call not to stay in the doorway. You know, Jesus said: I am the door as written: *I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep.*⁸ *All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them.*⁹ *Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures.*¹⁰ *The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life (John 10:7-10).* Now I do understand Lord! You just opened my eyes. **This is a call to glorious living!** Wow!

What happened? Lord I gave my life to you so many years ago and I got saved from that moment. But I gave the enemy the opportunity to steal a rich and satisfying life which You promised. It was in my grasp, all available and I wasn't even aware. It's all available in this very life as written: *Yes, Jesus replied, and I assure you that everyone who has given up house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God,*³⁰ *will be repaid many times over in this life, and will have eternal life in the world to come (Luke 18:29-30).* Now I do understand the process:

1. I give my life to Jesus. This is accepting His work on the mighty cross and going through the door, which is Jesus Himself. This is my salvation, a passport to enter the Kingdom after leaving my earthly body.
2. To continue my journey into the Kingdom already here on earth I have to do something for it is written: *So you see, faith by itself isn't enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless (James 2:17).* So, I have to shoulder my cross, to pay a price, to give up something to receive a rich and satisfying life in this very life. And regarding shouldering my cross You say: *Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.*²⁹ *Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*³⁰ *For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light (Matthew 11:28-30).* **We got a deal Lord!** I will be victorious and sit with You on Your throne. Now I realize: a throne is not standing in the doorway, it's in the throne room, in the center of the city, the Kingdom, the new Jerusalem.

Its party time!

*Praise the LORD! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.*⁷ *Let us be glad and rejoice, and let us give honor to him. For the time has come for the wedding feast of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself.*⁸ *She has been given the finest of pure white linen to wear. For the fine linen represents the good deeds of God's holy people (Revelation 19:6-8).*² *And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.*³ *I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them (Revelation 21:2-3).* Wow Lord, did I produce my own white wedding dress by my own good deeds? Amazing. And my dear friends, never ever let the enemy deceive you anymore and steal your privileges. **The wedding party is right now**, as written: *The feast has been prepared. The bulls and fattened cattle have been killed, and everything is ready. Come to the banquet! (Matthew 22:4).* Don't postpone it to the new heaven and earth. For what else reason is Jesus in Matthew 22:12-13 a guest sending outside because he has no wedding dress (no good deeds). He still calls this man (a guest) "friend", which is logical for this man got saved, but not yet allowed to enter the party already here on earth. **Get dressed and enjoy the party!** Another reason to know that this is on this side of life: do you really believe that on the new heaven and new earth burglars are present in the Kingdom? No way! Again: Get dressed and enjoy the party already here on earth!

Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness (Exodus 5:1). We will have a party, within the spiritual Kingdom of God, in occupied territory, called the earth. Hallelujah!

18. The Kingdom, good works and shouldering your cross.

There are three major stages in the Kingdom and all of those three stages are demanding something from us.

1. Entering the Kingdom: Once we bow down for King Jesus and accept His payment for our sins we are entering the Kingdom, which is our salvation as written: *Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God."* (John 3:3). This entering (born again) is going through the gate, but not farther for the moment. If you do this on this side of life, you will stay in the Kingdom after your death and not in the Hades (porch of hell) until Jesus second coming. If you don't make that choice on this side of life, you will stay in the Hades (porch of hell) after your death until Jesus second coming and if you have done good works of justice here on this side of life you will receive on the final day again an invitation to enter the Kingdom. Just on the last day. You still have to bow down for Jesus at that last invitation, for He is the only way to the Kingdom. (see more in our study "God's judgments, the power of His love").
2. The spiritual Kingdom on earth: To penetrate further in the (spiritual) Kingdom already here on earth and to enjoy the benefits already here on earth (on this side) you have to shoulder your cross, to give up something as written: "Yes," *Jesus replied, "and I assure you that everyone **who has given up** house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the Kingdom of God, ³⁰ **will be repaid many times over in this life, and will have eternal life in the world to come*** (Luke 18:29-30).
3. The new heaven and the new earth: To enter the new heaven and new earth after Jesus second coming you have to bow down for the King of Kings on this side or the other (condition 1). However your position on the new heaven and new earth is depending on your good works of justice on this side! And this is applicable for both Christians and non Christians (on this side). So this is our attitude: ***Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.*** ¹⁰ *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad* (2 Corinthians 5:9-10). Christians are not saved by works (Ephesians 2:8-9), but our good works, and the motives from which they are done, will determine our eternal rewards. Therefore, because of this and other reasons, let's adopt Paul's teaching: "Keeping God's commands is what counts" (1 Corinthians 7:19). *Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;* ²⁰ *but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.* ²¹ *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also* (Matthew 6:19-21). Jesus wants you to be rich with heavenly treasures! These heavenly treasures cannot and will not ever be exhausted or depleted, as earthly treasures are: *Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys* (Luke 12:33). **How rich will you be in God's eternal Kingdom?** You are now determining the answer to that question by your faithful labors for His Kingdom or lack thereof.

19. The millennium reign of Christ and His Church.

Never let this "millennium" topic be an opportunity to get divided among each other. Confess to each other: Jesus Christ is the only way to our salvation, He will return and be aware: *But while knowledge makes us feel important, **it is love that really builds up the church.*** ² *Anyone who claims to know all the answers doesn't really know very much.* ³ *But the person who loves God is the one whom God knows and cares for* (1 Corinthians 8:1-3).

Personally I do believe the millennium period has been started after Jesus first coming and is the same period of the (spiritual) Kingdom on earth. I do believe all things out of the Scripture mentioned in this study are pointing in that direction, however "Anyone who claims to know all the answers doesn't really know very much", so, I am really

open-minded for your feedback. Lets first have a look at the Scripture regarding this topic.

⁴ And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. ⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years (Revelation 20:4-6).

- I saw **thrones**, and **they sat on them**, and **judgment was committed to them**. God's children are already sitting on the throne and judging in the Old Testament as written: *Here stand the thrones where judgment is given, the thrones of the dynasty of David (Psalm 122:5).*
- If we endure hardship, **we will reign with him**. If we deny him, he will deny us (2 Timothy 2:12). Compare this verse with: *Those who are victorious will sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat with my Father on his throne (Revelation 3:21).* In the Greek translation has "enduring hardship" and "being victorious" the same explanation. Even the word "victorious" in Revelation 3 is explained: *of Christians, that hold fast their faith even unto death against the power of their foes, and temptations and persecutions.* 2 Timothy 2:12 is before Jesus second coming. If Revelation 3:21 is expressing the same, how can this be after Jesus second coming? And why is the Greek Bible speaking in Revelation 3:21 about "even unto death"? If this is after Jesus second coming you won't die anymore.
- The Kingdom came **with Jesus first coming**: *But if I am casting out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you. (Matthew 12:28).* God's Kingdom since 2000 years. Jesus is King. Don't you think He is reigning since then? *Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the World (John 18:37).* I am curious where I can find verses in the scripture about Christ's millennium reign outside Revelation 20:4-6 who are pointing after Jesus second coming. No my dear friends, our Lord reigns during the whole New Testament period, and there is no gap, as written: ⁶ *For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the **government** will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.* ⁷ *Of the increase of His **government** and peace There will be **no end**, upon the throne of David and over His **kingdom**, to order it and establish it with justice and righteousness **from that time** forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this (Isaiah 9:6-7).* Jesus became King with His first coming as written: *He would raise up the Christ to sit on the throne of David (Acts 2:29-34), to fulfill the prophesy of the prophet Zechariah: Tell the daughter of Zion, behold, your King is coming to you (Matthew 21:5).*
- These scripture is often called "**the thousands years of peace**". Here in Revelation 20:4-6 it is not at all about "peace". The word peace is not in there! It is about judgment and reigning. That's all.
- *Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world **have become the kingdoms of our Lord** and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" ¹⁷ We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty, The One who is and who was **and who is to come**, Because You have taken Your great power and reigned (Revelation 11:15, 17).* This is interesting. The proclamation of the start of the reign of the Messiah, Jesus the Christ. At that very moment *the kingdoms of this world **have become the kingdoms of our Lord*** and at the same time He still **is to come**. My dear friends, the reign of Jesus

the Christ, the Messiah as King in His Kingdom has begun with His first coming, He will reign forever, and is still to come (His second coming).

- *Blessed and holy is he **who has part in the first resurrection**. Over such the second death has no power, **but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years** (Revelation 20:6). Do you know what the first resurrection means? If then **you were raised with Christ**, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God (Colossians 3:1). You are having part in the first resurrection = you were raised with Christ = being born again. This is also confirmed in next verse: *This means that anyone who belongs to Christ **has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!*** (2 Corinthians 5:17). See also Romans 6:1-14. Let's have a look on the word "reign" in Revelation 20:6 in the Greek Bible: βασιλεύω,ν {bas-il-yoo'-o}, to be king, to exercise kingly power, to reign. This is the same word as the word "Kingdom" in Matthew 12:28: βασιλεία,ν {bas-il-i'-ah}, royal power, kingship, dominion, rule. Cool he! So, **and shall reign with Him a thousand years** means **and shall Kingdom with Him a thousand years**. In this very life, before Jesus second coming you shall reign with Him a thousand years! This is the Millennium.*
- The scripture is very clear about **satan during this same period of thousand years**: *And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day (Jude 1:6)*. Jude is writing about A.D. 65, in the first century to Christians that God has securely chained the fallen angels, and satan is one of them. Peter is confirming this: *For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment (2 Peter 2:4)*. The word "hell" here is not the eternal lake of fire but the Hades. *Rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them!* (Revelation 12:12a). *Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself. This He said, signifying by what death He would die (John 12:31-33)*. Satan judged and cast out the heavenly places, 2000 years ago, securely chained in his own dark dominion, when Jesus took the victory. To be more specific: **and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished.** (Revelation 20:3). By the way: have you noted "**Now is the judgment of this world**". Apparently the judgment of the world was 2000 years ago. This is also confirmed in next verse: *And when He (the Holy Spirit) **has** come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world **is** judged (John 16:8-11)*. Mhhh, be careful with all those scary so called "end times" judgment scenario's. ⁷ *And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,* ⁸ *but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.* ⁹ *So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.* ¹⁰ *Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "**Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.*** ¹¹ *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death"* (Revelation 12:7-11).
- **What will happen during the rapture?** *We tell you this directly from the Lord: We who are still living **when the Lord returns** will not meet him ahead of those who have died.* ¹⁶ *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the Christians who have died will rise from their graves.* ¹⁷ *Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught*

*up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever.*¹⁸ So encourage each other with these words (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18). This is about all Christians of all ages in its diversity (all 7 churches) and not only the Philadelphia ones. Further it is a describing of the transition into heaven (not the spiritual Kingdom) of both who have died and those alive when the Lord returns. This rapture, which definitely will take place, is not for some special "super Philadelphia Christians", and it is not a "silent left behind". No it will be a majestic happening with a shout of the Lord, with the voice of an archangel, with the trumpet of God and the dead in Christ will rise first. The context of 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 is not about protection against the great time of testing (as in Revelation 3:10), it is comforting us concerning those (dead in Christ!) who have fallen asleep. The book 2 Peter 3 is describing the period after Jesus second coming. First it is comparing the period between Jesus first and second coming as a period of thousand years: *But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day* (2 Peter 3:8). Then Peter is describing what will happen after the Lords return as mentioned in 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18: ¹⁰*But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment.*¹³ *But we are looking forward to **the new heavens and new earth** he has promised, a world filled with God's righteousness* (2 Peter 3:10, 13). After the rapture the new heavens and new earth.

*For the kingdom is the LORD's, and He rules over the nations (Psalm 22:28). And in the days of these kings **the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever** (Daniel 2:44). For your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom. **You rule throughout all generations** (Psalm 145:13).*

20. Some more words about the Kingship of Jesus.

Many claim to worship and serve Jesus, but they deny the real Jesus of the scriptures. A large segment of the denominational world deny Jesus' present Kingship by claiming that Jesus' reign as King is yet future. This doctrine is known as Premillennialism. In Revelation 17:14 Jesus is called "Lord of lords, and King of kings." Notice that at the time of the event being described He is called Lord of lords, and King of kings. Paul referred to Jesus as "only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords" (1 Timothy 6:15). At the time of 1 Timothy 6, Jesus was King of kings. Notice that Jesus is said to be simultaneously Potentate, Lord of lords, and King of kings. Jesus received all authority (a Potentate is one who has authority) after his resurrection from the dead (Matthew 28:18, Romans 1:4). Jesus was also known to be Lord, one who had authority and must be obeyed (Luke 6:46).

The King is born: The angel Gabriel explained to Mary regarding the child she carried within her (Luke 1: 26-35). Gabriel also explained that Jesus, her child, would be called the *"Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end"* (Luke 1:32-33). Mary did not know that the child she carried would be King. The wise men are confirming this: *Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem,*² *saying, "Where is **He who has been born King of the Jews?** (Matthew 2:1-2). Even Pilate had a better view than many Christians today: *Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?" Jesus answered, "**You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world** (John 18:37).**

The King is crucified: The climax of Jesus' life began when he was arrested and subjected to mock trials (John 18). Notice how the Roman ruler Pilate presented Jesus to

the Jews who had Jesus arrested and set up for trial and ultimate death by crucifixion: "**Behold your King!**" (John 19:14). Pilate attempted to reason with the mad mob by asking them, "*Shall I crucify your King?*" (John 19:15). In connection with the crucifixion we read, "*And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross, and the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS*" (John 19:19). When the Jews wanted the title changed, Pilate refused to make any change (John 19:21-22). It is apparent from the dialogue between Jesus and Pilate that Pilate believed Jesus to be the King (John 18:33-37), however the Jews refused Him as King. I personally believe that many Christians today, who postpone Jesus Kingship to a period somewhere at the very end of the ages, making a similar mistake as the Jews did at that time. For sure those group of Christians today are open to accept the Kingship of Jesus, however have a different view of the time schedule, which is in my opinion unintended in favor of the enemy.

The Kingdom of the King: After Jesus was crucified, buried, and resurrected the third day, He revealed himself for 40 days in order to prove His resurrection (Acts 1:3). Notice that Jesus spoke to his apostles "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (a Kingdom presupposes a King). When did the Kingdom came upon us: *But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you* (Matthew 12:28). Exactly in the days during Jesus walk on earth with His first coming.

The King on His throne: David as a prophet is confirming the Kingship of Jesus with Jesus' first coming: *Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne* (Acts 2:30). "*For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand* (Acts 2:34). So, Jesus sat on His Throne when He ascended to heaven as also written: ²⁸ "*And I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Son of Man coming in his Kingdom.*" (Matthew 16:28) and "*Jesus went on to say, "I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the Kingdom of God arrive in great power!"*" (Mark 9:1). **This is all about the sign of His coming in His Kingdom in their generation!**

The King is now reigning: As mentioned in Matthew 12:28 the Kingdom has come when Jesus was casting out demons during His first coming. When Peter preached of Jesus' coronation (being officially made King), he presents Jesus as reigning at the time of Acts 2:32-33. The kingdom was in place during the First Century. Regarding the Christians at Colosse, we read: "*Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son*" (Colossians 1:13). John later wrote, "*I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ...*" (Revelation 1:9). Beloved, Jesus is presently reigning on the **spiritual throne** of David in heaven, where He also serves as high priest (Zechariah 6: 12-13; Hebrews 4:14-16). The scriptures do not teach that Jesus was to physically reign in the literal city of Jerusalem upon the material throne of David, after the fashion of a worldly government as written: *My kingdom is not of this world* (John 18:36).

During Jesus first coming and His second coming He will make our enemies our footstool as written: *For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool* (Acts 2:34-35). Jesus as King on the throne of David with His first coming and starting to make our enemies our footstool. In next verse we see the finishing of this process with Jesus second coming: *Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. **For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet*** (1 Corinthians 15:24-25).

The end of Jesus' reign in His Kingdom: *Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power* (1 Corinthians 15:24). Well, with Jesus second coming He will hand over His Kingdom

and Kingship to God the Father as also confirmed: *Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28)*. This will be the end of the spiritual Kingdom during the whole NT period and the start of the visible Kingdom in its full glory under leadership of the Father again!

In closing, Jesus is now Potentate, Lord of lords, and King of kings. Any doctrine to the contrary attempts to strip Jesus of his regality is in my opinion false. In view of Jesus' Kingship, we are obligated to submit to His reign and not act according to many Jews at that time : *But His citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us (Luke 19:14)*. Alas, **many want to view Jesus as Savior, but not as Potentate, Lord of lords, and King of Kings.**

21. A place of rest.

It shall come to pass in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve, ⁴ that you will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say: (Isaiah 14:3-4). In 'the day' 2000 years ago at the mighty Cross, Jesus arranged rest from our sorrows and created a **place of safety** against the enemy and his hard bondage. This place of safety is a spiritual place, the lower heavens He brought on earth, the spiritual Kingdom, and we ***will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon***, which means take and defend our position (a save place on earth) in Christ! This place of rest reminds me some verses out of the book of Hebrews: ¹ ***God's promise of entering his rest still stands, so we ought to tremble with fear that some of you might fail to experience it.*** ² ***For this good news—that God has prepared this rest—has been announced to us just as it was to them. But it did them no good because they didn't share the faith of those who listened to God.*** ³ ***For only we who believe can enter his rest.*** ⁴ ***We know it is ready because of the place in the Scriptures where it mentions the seventh day: "On the seventh day God rested from all his work.*** ⁶ ***So God's rest is there for people to enter, but those who first heard this good news failed to enter because they disobeyed God.*** ⁷ ***So God set another time for entering his rest, and that time is today.*** ¹¹ ***So let us do our best to enter that rest. But if we disobey God, as the people of Israel did, we will fall.*** ¹² ***For the word of God is alive and powerful (Hebrews 4:1-7,11-12)***. Well, it is up to you! This is not about the new heaven and earth, but this is about the spiritual Kingdom, on planet earth, now! **You can enter Gods place of rest (safety) today and be protected against the enemy!**

This is similar with the first generation Israelites who left Egypt. They were still Gods own people, and they were awaiting for the new heaven and new earth, however they never reached the place of rest and safety, the land of milk and honey, the promised land (the Kingdom) here on earth. You know why? *The people refused to enter the pleasant land, for they wouldn't believe his promise to care for them (Psalm 106:24)*.

22. Salvation versus the Kingdom.

"Someone asked Jesus: What good deed must I do to have eternal life? Jesus answered this question: keep the commandments. Which ones? the man asked. Jesus replied: You must ... I've obeyed all these commandments, the young man replied. What else must I do? Jesus told him: If you want to be perfect, go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me. But when the young man heard this, he went away sad, for he had many possessions. Then Jesus said to his disciples, I tell you the truth, it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 19:16-23)". This man is asking two different questions and is receiving two different answers.

The first question is about salvation: What must I do to have eternal life?

Because this man was living before the victory of Jesus at the mighty cross, the law and the prophets were still applicable, and the answer was: *Keep the commandments*. The answer for today is: Believe in Me and you will have eternal life as written: "God saved

you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it (Ephesians 2:8-9)". The first question is answered, this man has fulfilled the conditions, and has eternal life (his salvation is secure), which is only based on believe, 100% grace and not based on one single work from our side.

The second question is another one in addition: What else must I do? The answer is: *If you want to be perfect, ...* This question is not about salvation at all. Jesus is not judging this man regarding his decision but only suggesting him how to be perfect in addition to his salvation. As a result the consequences "*it is very hard for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of Heaven*" are also not about salvation.

What are the consequences of our choices regarding this "What else must I do"? If you accept the suggestion of Jesus: *You will receive a hundred times as much in return, in this very life, from that what you have given up, and in addition eternal life in the world to come (Matthew 19:29, Mark 10:29-30)*. Well, this means a blessing in this very life (living in the Kingdom) and in the world to come eternal life. If you don't accept the suggestion of Jesus to be perfect: In that case you are missing the blessings in this very life, however you still have eternal life in the world to come, which wasn't based on our works (being perfect in this second question), but only on grace (the first question). You didn't built on the foundation and are saved "as through the fire" as written: *If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire (1 Corinthians 3:15)*. You are missing the benefits of the Kingdom of Heaven in this very life, for "*faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead (James 2:17)*".

The Kingdom of heaven came with Jesus first coming, is spiritual and has many advantages, already in this very life. You will be placed outside the spiritual Kingdom in this very life if you say no to question number two, which is based on our works, to prove your faith and your thankfulness for your salvation. However salvation, eternal life in the world to come is based only on Grace and not on our works. Never mix that.

Please, never ever exclude anyone from eternal life based on human works. Thank You Lord for saving me only by grace and not because I was one of those five out of ten who had enough oil for my lamp (human works).

Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me....
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind, but now, I see.

23. Final word.

My dear friends, I hope and trust you enjoyed this study. I did my utmost to let the scripture speak and not myself, and to find red lines and coherence. In my opinion the Kingdom is a concept in the scripture which brings structure and balance between the different topics in the scripture. One thing what should be in balance in my opinion is the relation between the power of the Holy Spirit and the Kingship and ruler ship of Jesus the Christ and the Church and the Saints. Generally the Church is teaching very well about the Holy Spirit (therefore I keep more silence about this topic), but there is a lack of knowledge about the Kingdom.

God's desire for you is that you enter the Kingdom life *now* and experience, explore, apply, practice, and enjoy living with the benefits, promises, and privileges of Heaven on earth. The fact that the inhabitants of this beautiful Rainbow Nation are familiar with their "ubuntu" principle makes the ability to apply the Kingdom principle in your very lives even more achievable. Re-shift your attention from the individual (more Western) happiness in the heavenly realms to the shared happiness (Ubuntu principle!) on earth.
Don't wait for the Kingdom in its full glory! It's in your grasp, NOW!

*This precious treasure – this light and power that now shine within us – is held in perishable containers, that is, in our weak bodies. So everyone can see that our glorious power is from God and is not our own (2 Corinthians 4:7). **All glory to God!** Aware of our weak bodies, impressed with His light and glorious power that shines within us and working through us!*

All who are victorious will inherit all these blessings, and I will be their God, and they will be my children (Revelation 21:7).

But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; And you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves (Malachi 4:2). Once you recognized the shining morning star in the night of your life, you must prepare for the day. The announcement of the morning of a new day. He gives hope that the Sun will go up soon. This is Christ in us, our hope of glory. That is the true light that enlightens every man and woman, to the glory of God the Father.

Yours in His service,
Kees,
www.aliveministries-sa.org