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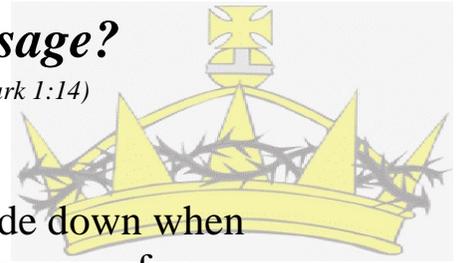


What was Jesus' Message?

"Jesus came into Galilee, preaching" (Mark 1:14)

Written by M. Larry Perrino

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Jesus turned the world upside down when
He brought a very special message from

God Almighty; in fact, His message is the most important announcement that we human beings will ever hear! But, what is that message that He brought? What is the Gospel message? Do you know what Jesus' message is? The Lord sent forth seventy; do we know what He command them to preach? Do you know the message that Paul and the Apostles preached? Are you sure?

Most Christians would agree that we have collectively believed, perhaps for all of our Christian lives, that the main message of the gospel is focused around the concept of the unbeliever repenting and inviting Jesus Christ into his or her heart! However when we closely investigate the early church especially those instances recorded in the Book of Acts, we never observe that the main message of the gospel is focused upon the concept of inviting Jesus into one's heart!

In no way does this statement imply that it is not important, even essential for believers to experience Jesus in their hearts! In fact, if an individual is indeed a believer, he/she will definitely experience the ever-present indwelling Holy Spirit of Jesus in his or her heart. Nevertheless, we never find Jesus teaching anyone to invite Him into their heart; neither, do we find the first-century disciples teaching unbelievers to invite Jesus into their hearts.

So, what then was the special message that Jesus brought into the world? What was the message that He commissioned the seventy to preach? What message did the Apostle Paul preach? In essence, we are asking, "What is the actual Gospel message?" Did Jesus preach one thing and His Apostles something different? What message does Jesus want His Church to proclaim on earth before His return?

Oh yes, we have heard that: the Bible teaches that we are to repent; the Bible teaches that we are to receive Jesus as our savior; the Bible teaches that we are saved by grace; the Bible teaches that we are to believe; the Bible teaches that we are to turn from darkness to

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light; the Bible teaches that we are to focus upon His death, burial, and resurrection; the Bible teaches that we are to receive the Holy Spirit; the Bible teaches that we are to

confess Him as Lord and recognize Him as the Son of God! Since all of these concepts originate in the Bible, obviously they are correct; however, these concepts in themselves do not convey the special Gospel message that Jesus brought to this earth?

What brings unity to both testaments? Is there a collective message that is discernable out of the whole of the Bible? Shouldn't the total Word of God (*the Bible*) convey one single message to mankind? In order to get answers to these questions it is necessary for us to develop a better understanding of the actual message that Jesus brought to this earth!

We can begin to wrap our minds around Jesus' message by first observing some information that was revealed to the prophet Daniel, "in the days of these kings ***shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed:*** and ***the kingdom*** shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, ***and it shall stand for ever***" (Dan 2:44). Daniel made it clear that there was going to be a future kingdom of God that would "***never be destroyed!***" He prophesied about an everlasting kingdom. In contrast to Daniel's description of a much longer "***everlasting***" kingdom, most Christians believe that the literal kingdom of God will last for merely one thousand years or the duration of the Millennium. Nevertheless, Daniel was consistent concerning an "***everlasting***" kingdom. In chapter two he outlined all the kingdoms that would ultimately rule over the earth; just five chapters later he revealed information regarding the special King who would rule over the kingdom of God, "there was ***given him (the Messiah) dominion, and glory, and a kingdom,*** that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: ***his dominion is an everlasting dominion,*** which shall not pass away, and ***his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed***" (Dan 7:14). Indeed he wrote, "But the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom ***for ever, even for ever and ever***" (Dan 7:18). Daniel stressed that the Kingdom of God would last forever, "the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is ***an everlasting kingdom***" (Dan 7:27). Shouldn't we expect that Jesus' message from the Father must somehow correlate to that everlasting kingdom identified by Daniel?

The prophet Isaiah also wrote similar things concerning this government; he too made a correlation between the kingdom and its king, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of ***his government*** and peace ***there shall be no end***" (Isa 9:6-7). The Old Testament prophets identified a future kingdom; but can we find this kingdom of God in the New Testament?

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We are going to discover that Jesus came preaching the same message of a kingdom that the people of the Old Testament period recognized! He proclaimed this same everlasting kingdom, "Jesus came into Galilee, ***preaching the gospel*** (*good news*) ***of the kingdom of God***" (Mark 1:14). His message was the same message that the people of Israel had heard for thousands of years! They expected a *Messiah* to come and set-up a kingdom! It was because of his confusion over this very kingdom that John the Baptist sent questions with two of his disciples asking Jesus, "Art thou he (*The Messiah (king) of the kingdom*) that should come? or look we for another?" (Luke 7:19) On another occasion Jesus, "perceived that they would come and take him by force, ***to make him a king***" (John 6:15). These Jews were actually looking for their *Messiah* to show-up so they could overthrow the Roman governmental yoke that ruled over them! Based upon their understanding of the Scriptures, they looked for the Roman Government to be put down, and allow the Jewish nation to rise to its former glory under their *Messiah*!

Notice what Matthew writes concerning Jesus' message, "From that time ***Jesus began to preach***, and to say, Repent: for ***the kingdom of heaven is at hand***" (Matt 4:17); he continues a few verses later, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching ***the gospel of the kingdom*** (*Jesus' message was a message of the kingdom*) and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people" (Matt 4:23). Healing and miracles automatically came along with the preaching of ***the gospel of the kingdom***! Jesus was compelled to preach ***the kingdom of God***, "And he said unto them, ***Lmust*** preach ***the kingdom of God***" (Luke 4:43). We should begin to get a hold of the concept that Jesus was sent from God to this earth as the primary messenger of ***the gospel of the kingdom***!

Clearly, Jesus preached the kingdom of God. He also commanded His disciples to preach about this kingdom; "he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. 2 And he sent them ***to preach the kingdom of God***, and to heal the sick" (Luke 9:1-2).

We have observed that the prophets prophesied of the Kingdom of God; we have also observed that the whole nation of Israel looked for the *Messiah* to establish the kingdom of God; likewise, we noted how John the Baptist made specific inquiry concerning the kingdom of God. We have read where Jesus himself preached the kingdom of God, and now we see that He sent forth His disciples with the same message of the kingdom of God, "After these things ***the Lord appointed other seventy also***, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come. (*Notice what Jesus sent these disciples to do.*) 9 And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, ***The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you***" (Luke 10:1-9).

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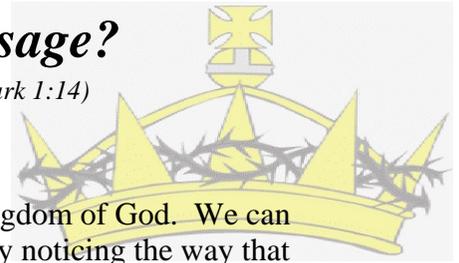


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Jesus' whole focus was upon the kingdom of God. We can easily observe His dominant focus by noticing the way that He responded to one of His disciples who wanted to bury a close family member, "Lord, suffer me first to go and **bury my father**. 60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but **go thou and preach the kingdom of God**" (Luke 9:59-60). Jesus focused upon preaching the message of the Kingdom of God! He prioritized the preaching of the kingdom of God above everything else, even above the personal lives of His disciples.

Next we should take note of the message in the Book of Acts that was preached by Jesus' disciples, "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached **Christ** unto them. (Notice that the specific topic of his message was "Christ;" notice next how that message is integral to the message of the Kingdom of God.) 12 But when **they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God**, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:5-12). Notice what Paul preached, "And he (Paul) went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, **disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God**" (Acts 19:8). We can also observe the subject of Paul's teaching toward the end of his ministry, "And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom **he (Paul) expounded and testified the kingdom of God**, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening" (Acts 28:23). Even at the very end of his ministry, we see the consistency in Paul's message, "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, 31 **Preaching the kingdom of God**, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28:30-31).

We have observed that Paul and Philip both preached "Christ" and "the kingdom of God." Sadly, the Christian church today has somehow reduced the message of the Gospel down to merely the salvation aspects associated with Jesus. The church has essentially eliminated Jesus' primary message, which is "the kingdom of God!"

It is as if the very name "Jesus Christ" embodies the Gospel message. There are two components to that name and each component identifies a different aspect of the gospel message. The name (*Jesus*) literally means salvation! His title (*Christ*) expresses that He is the "king." So, the whole name Jesus Christ means "salvation" and "a king."

Since the church has so focused upon the salvation (*Jesus*) aspects of the Lord, let's give some attention to His title, "Christ." The term "Christ" (*Christos*) literally means the anointed-one; "he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his **anointed**" (1 Sam 2:10). Kings were the anointed-ones in ancient Israel; Saul was the first anointed-one. Notice how David reacted when King Saul wrongly pursued him, "The LORD forbid that I

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should do this thing unto my master, **the LORD's anointed**, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing **he is the anointed of the LORD**" (1 Sam 24:6). In ancient

Israel, the anointed-one was the king or the high priest and these individuals were definitely selected and established by God Himself!

Isaiah wrote of a human yet divine king that would arise and become the last anointed-one this one would be so anointed that he would actually be thought of as God, "For unto us a child is born (*human*), unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, **The mighty God** (*divine*), The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of **his government** (*kingdom*) and peace there shall be no end" (Isa 9:6-7).

Notice how the Scriptures reveal the Jewish perspective concerning the anointed-one, "And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, **saying that he himself is Christ** (*the anointed-one*) **a King**" (Luke 23:2). According to the Jewish way of thinking, according to their perspective, they were incensed that Jesus claimed to be "Christ" (*the anointed-one*)! If you would like to obtain more information regarding, the *Messiah and His anointing* we recommend the Bible Study entitled, "**Anointed Son of the Blessed**;" the Bible Study can be obtained from the Internet address: <http://www.rivkah.org>.

Jesus showed Himself to be the anointed-one; He was the king who came to deliver the people from their enemy. We have read where during the beginning of His ministry, He sent seventy emissaries throughout Israel to announce His soon-coming arrival. We've got to begin to understand that He (*the Messiah*) was the entire focus when, "there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, 2 Saying, **Where is he that is born King of the Jews?**" (Matt 2:1-2). Obviously, this group of Magi greatly disturbed Herod the King; therefore, "he (*Herod*) had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where **Christ** (*The anointed-one, the king*) should be born" (Matt 2:4). He received his answer from the Jews, "And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, **art not the least among the princes of Juda**: for out of thee shall come a **Governor**, (*anointed-one*) that shall rule my people Israel" (Matt 2:6). Herod was so bothered by the announcement of the *Messiah* that he, "**sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem**, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under" (Matt 2:16). Jesus was Christ (*the anointed-one*) sent from God; He was the King who was destined to rule over the kingdom of God! The messenger and the message were one and the same!

Not only did Jesus perform the work of the *Messiah*, Paul explained how Jesus was indeed the *Messiah* (*Christ*), "And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 3 Opening and alleging, that **Christ**

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(Christos which means the anointed-one, the Hebrew word for the Greek "Christos" is Messiah!) must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus,

whom I preach unto you, is Christ" (Acts 17:2-3). Notice the problem that the governmental authorities had with Paul and the Christians, "these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, **saying that there is another king, one Jesus**" (Acts 17:7). Essentially, these people openly claimed allegiance to a new king! However, Jesus did not focus His attention against governmental authorities; this means that in effect, He illustrated openly to all that the Roman government was not His primary enemy! Instead, the real enemy was the spirit being who influences mankind through the spirit realm!

We have seen that the Bible clearly shows that during the period of the gospels, the kingdom of God was predominantly preached by Jesus and His disciples; and in the Book of Acts the primary teaching is that Jesus is the king (*Messiah*) of the kingdom; and Paul's epistles teach that God, "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into **the kingdom of his dear Son**" (Col 1:13). Paul explained in another place that, "For **the kingdom of God** is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom 14:17). That is to say, the kingdom of God should be considered a spiritual reality before thinking of it as a physical reality.

Paul was an apostle to the Gentiles, and since they were not Jewish, they were unfamiliar with any concept concerning the Kingdom of God! In their minds and according to their experience, Caesar was Lord! He was even proclaimed as deity. On the contrary, Paul taught them that Caesar was not their Lord; rather, Jesus is Lord! Paul simply used gentile terminology to teach the same identical message of the kingdom of God.

We have observed that Jesus did not focus his battle against the political arena; instead, He focused upon the forces of the spirit realm. In ancient Israel, it was the duty of the king to deliver the people from their adversaries; that is why Saul was so upset because the women were singing, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. 8 And **Saul was very wrath**, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and **what can he have more but the kingdom?"** (1 Sam 18:7-8) The point is that when David single-handedly conquered Israel's enemy Goliath, as a result he was elevated in the eyes of the people into the stature of a king. In the same way, Jesus took out the spiritual powers of darkness, "And having **spoiled principalities and power**, he made a shew of them openly, **triumphing over them**" (Col 2:15). In the spirit realm, Jesus Christ is Lord; He is King! Therefore man must turn from whatever / whomever he serves to Jesus! That is the essence of the act of repentance!

As a result of the fall of Lucifer, the earth became the headquarters of the rebellion against God. Since the time of Adam, we human beings have all been drafted or involuntarily

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conscripted from birth into that rebellion. In order to change sides and effectively resist this rebellion, it required that we must have a change of heart and thereby repent and

turn to God! This means that in a spiritual sense, the kingdom of God is the sphere in which His rule is acknowledged! He saves us by grace and gives us a new heart and a new spirit; as a result we become part of His kingdom and acknowledge His rule over our lives! A king is the ruler and his domain is his kingdom; Jesus' domain will one day include the entirety of the earth!

What is the gospel (*good news*) of the kingdom? The gospel is that God is active in the person of Jesus (*salvation*) the Christ (*christos the anointed-one*) to deliver humanity from the rulership of satan the devil who had previously held us in bondage under his government, "***the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not***" (2 Cor 4:4). We previously were governed by an unholy spirit, which at one time or another has ruled over all of humanity! However, we have proclaimed with our own mouths that we no longer serve that master and instead we serve the LORD Jesus Christ, "if thou shalt ***confess with thy mouth*** the Lord (*king over us*) Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Rom 10:9). We have been given a new heart and a new spirit through which we can conquer the enemy and Jesus Christ is Lord! When we confess that Jesus is our Lord (*Master, King*) we essentially proclaim that we live under the dictates of His new kingdom!

The kingdom of God comes in two forms: the first aspect is spiritual in nature; Jesus came against a spiritual force; He came to destroy evil, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, ***that he might destroy the works of the devil***" (1 John 3:8). The second form of the kingdom is a literal physical manifestation, "he shewed himself alive ***after his passion*** by many infallible proofs, ***being seen of them forty days***, and speaking of the things pertaining to ***the kingdom of God***" (Acts 1:3). First, Jesus fought against the spiritual forces and then He showed himself openly after His resurrection to those who believed. In the same way the Kingdom of God will have in the future an outward manifestation through those of us who are believers, "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with ***the glory which shall be revealed in us***" (Rom 8:18).

Throughout the entire period of the church age, we will look forward to the literal kingdom of God as a yet future reality. Jesus taught those who would become the church, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 ***Thy kingdom come***" (Matt 6:9-10). Obviously, when we pray for something **to come**; that thing that we pray for, is a yet future manifestation.

The Bible teaches that there was a time preordained by God when the gospel of the kingdom of God would be preached, "The law and the prophets were until John: ***since that***

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time the kingdom of God is preached" (Luke 16:16).

Notice also the message that will be preached during the end of the age, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be

preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come"

(Matt 24:14). Our questions are, "Is the message of the Gospel one of 'salvation' or one of 'the kingdom of God' or both; and how does the gospel message relate to the new-birth?"

The leadership of the Jews had completely missed the concept of a new birth of the heart. Nevertheless, the Old Testament clearly records, "And ***I will give them one heart***, and I will put ***a new spirit within you***; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an ***heart of flesh***" (Ezek 11:19); Ezekiel repeated that same message twenty-five chapters later, "***A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you:*** and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And ***I will put my spirit within you***, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them" (Ezek 36:26-27). Obviously, this whole concept of a new spirit in man was lost upon the Jews!

Nicodemus came to Jesus by night and struggled with the notion of the new born-again experience. Jesus told him that humans must be born-again; Nicodemus was amazed at Jesus' teaching, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou ***a master of Israel***, and knowest not these things?" (John 3:10) The definite article is used in that passage before the word "master." This means that Jesus referred to Nicodemus as ***the master***. This implies that he was probably a member of the Sanhedrin. Notice Nicodemus's skepticism as he responded, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? 5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, ***he cannot enter into the kingdom of God***" (John 3:4-5). Through these few words, Jesus essentially taught that the born-again process is directly linked to the process of entering into the kingdom of God!

We read in the scripture that, "***if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus***, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, ***thou shalt be saved***" (Rom 10:9). We refer to this "confession" as the time when the Christian is "saved;" this is also referred to as the instant when the Christian is "born-again."

After we are born-again, we should realize that once we change our allegiance and God has, "delivered us ***from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son***" (Col 1:13), the devil and his demons are not just going to simply let us freely get by in all things, "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus ***shall suffer persecution***" (2 Tim 3:12). We should expect resistance from the kingdom of darkness particularly in the area of persecution! The scripture clearly teaches, "that ***we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God***" (Acts 14:22). Only when we

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stand up against "the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph 6:12) can we expect to gain ground in the spirit realm. However, we

must not make the same mistake that the Jews made and think that we are supposed to overthrow some physical entity. Our fight takes place in the spirit realm, "For we wrestle ***not against flesh and blood***, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, ***against spiritual wickedness in high places***" (Eph 6:12)! We must realize that in the spirit realm, "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and ***the violent*** (*we Christians who are part of the resistance*) ***take it by force***" (Matt 11:12).

So what was the message of the Gospel? Mark records, "Now after that John was put in prison, ***Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God***" (Mark 1:14). Jesus was the messenger and the message all in one! Therefore, when we hear the gospel of salvation through Jesus, we should immediately realize that the gospel message ***also includes*** the everlasting kingdom (*Christ*) of God!

What does it mean for us to proclaim Jesus as our Lord? In the eyes of far too many Christians, satan appears to be our greatest enemy; however, that is simply not true! He ***was*** our enemy; however, he no longer has any influence over the Christian! The only weapon that he can use against us is our old way of thinking! The devil can only bring up our past; therefore, our spiritual battle is to renew our minds, "That ***he might sanctify and cleanse it (the church) with the washing of water by the word***" (Eph 5:26). Notice that Jesus does the cleansing as we study His word!

The problem is that Christians all too often fear satan more than they trust in God; satan really has no access to a Christian. Sin (*satan*) ***no longer has dominion*** over Christians, "sin ***shall not have dominion over you***: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Rom 6:14). In other words, we can draw upon help during our spiritual warfare, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. ***Resist the devil***, (*we are part of the resistance*) and he will flee from you. 8 Draw nigh to God, and ***he will draw nigh to you***" (James 4:7-8). "Submit" means to let Jesus have His way instead of seeking our own way. Instead of blaming the devil or the world for all of our problems, we need the Holy Spirit to look into our hearts and identify to us those areas where we have allowed the devil undue access. Applying the focus of God's word as a cleansing agent in these areas is certainly a form of submission to God; as a result, the devil flees from us. The process is a three-step process: (1) We submit to God; (2) We resist the devil; and (3) He flees from us!

Jesus told His disciples, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and ***over all the power of the enemy***: and nothing shall by any means hurt you" (Luke 10:19). Nevertheless, the church of Jesus Christ has only in recent years truly began to realize that she has dominion over the earth, our flesh, and the devil. Jesus said, "All

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authority (*dominion*) has been given to Me, in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). Our king has all authority!

We must believe and trust in His ability to take care of His

subjects and back us up when we properly exercise His authority over our circumstances!

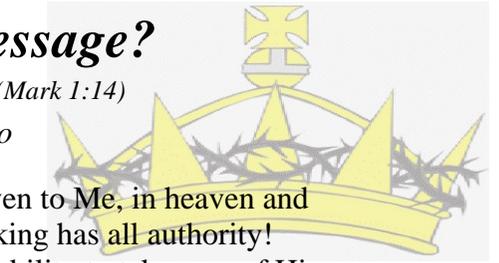
In a spiritual sense, we are already part of the Kingdom of God and we gladly submit ourselves under His rule in this world. We are learning to take authority over ourselves, our homes, and our own sphere of influence. When we exercise authority in the spirit realm we grow spiritually. By faith we look to and anticipate the future time promised in Scripture when we will literally exercise all authority under Jesus Christ, "the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given *to the saints of the most High*; and the time came that *the saints possessed the kingdom*" (Dan 7:22)!

To the Kingdom!

To the kingdom!

To the Kingdom!

Forever Lives Our King!



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Written by *M. Larry Perrino* © 2005 by Rivkah Ministries

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