

## CHAPTER 12

# THE DISPENSATION OF THE KINGDOM

(From the Second Coming of Christ  
to the New Heaven and New Earth)

In this chapter we shall study the last of the seven dispensations. Jesus once taught His disciples to pray, "THY \_\_\_\_\_ COME" (Matthew 6:10). God's great Kingdom is coming (Revelation 11:15). The time is coming when men will do God's will IN EARTH (see Matthew 6:10). Is this true today? \_\_\_\_\_ Is God's will being done on earth today or are men, for the most part, ignoring God and doing whatever they want to do?

\_\_\_\_\_ God's kingdom is not here yet, but it is coming!

For centuries people have dreamed of a better world. They have longed for the kind of world that is free from war and crime and hunger and disease. The Bible teaches that a better world is coming. In fact, it is possible that God's kingdom on earth may be less than ten years away! **[This is not an attempt at date-setting. We are merely stating that this is a possibility, but it would only be a reality if the rapture were to come in the next year or so. It is also a possibility that the arrival of the kingdom will be delayed for many more years. God knows the time, not us].**

In the last chapter we studied the time of great tribulation which will be the most difficult time of trouble the world has ever known (Matthew 24:21). Did you know that the worst will be followed by the best? After the difficult tribulation years Jesus Christ will return to this earth and will establish His Kingdom (Matthew 24:29-30). This will mark the beginning of a "better world." It will be a time of blessing and prosperity such as the world has never known since the fall of man into sin.

### 1. MAN'S STATE AT THE BEGINNING.

What will the kingdom be like? How will conditions on earth be different from what they are today? What will life be like in the future kingdom? How can this "better world" be described? Let us consider 10 things that will be true during the Kingdom:

#### 1) Christ will be King over all the earth.

"And the LORD shall be King over \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_" (Zechariah 14:9). Jesus Christ will be the President and sovereign Ruler of the entire world! Who will serve this King (Daniel 7:14)? \_\_\_\_\_

According to Isaiah 2:3, what city will be the capital of Christ's kingdom?

\_\_\_\_\_ Christ's government during the Kingdom is sometimes

described as a **THEOCRACY** (a government RULED BY GOD). The GOD-MAN will be on the throne. There could not be a more perfect Ruler.

## **2) Christ will be the perfect Ruler.**

Our world has known some very terrible rulers (such as the Pharaoh of the Exodus, Herod the Great, Hitler, Saddam Hussein and many others). Many have been cruel and ambitious and selfish and unfair. Even the best rulers and presidents have been far from perfect. During the Kingdom age there will be a PERFECT RULER: "For the LORD is our \_\_\_\_\_, the LORD is our \_\_\_\_\_, the LORD is our \_\_\_\_\_" (Isaiah 33:22). This verse reminds us of the three branches of America's federal government. The Lord Jesus will be the perfect Judge (SUPREME COURT), the perfect King (PRESIDENT) and He will make perfect laws (CONGRESS)! Jesus Christ will be the SUPREME COURT, the CONGRESS and the PRESIDENT all in One Person!

## **3) Christ will rule in perfect fairness and righteousness.**

He will rule and judge the world with R \_\_\_\_\_ (Isaiah 11:4-5). Everything this King will do and everything this King will say will be fair and just and **right!** He will do not wrong. He will rule the world without making any mistakes. Every decision He makes will be right and fair and just.

## **4) There will be peace on earth.**

"He maketh wars to \_\_\_\_\_ unto the end of the earth" (Psalm 46:9). Is this true today? \_\_\_\_\_ According to Isaiah 2:4, there will be no need for an Army or Navy or Air Force during the Kingdom age. Warfare will be a thing of the past because the Prince of \_\_\_\_\_ (Isaiah 9:6) will be on the throne.

## **5) All men will be taught the truth about God.**

Today there are hundreds of religions in the world. Men have all different kinds of ideas about who God is and what God is like. In the Kingdom age things will be much different. Men will have perfect education. The Lord Himself will be ruling on earth and teaching men the truth about God (Isaiah 2:3). No false religions will be allowed. Only the truth will be taught. Everyone must worship the King! Will missionaries be needed to tell people that they need to know the Lord (Jeremiah 31:34)? \_\_\_\_\_ Will the whole earth know about the Lord (Isaiah 11:9)? \_\_\_\_\_ Is this true today? \_\_\_\_\_

## **6) Satan will not be around to cause trouble.**

In Revelation chapter 20 we learn that the kingdom age will last for 1000 years. Write down the verses in this chapter that mention these 1000 years: \_\_\_\_\_ This is why the Kingdom age is often called the MILLENNIUM (this word simply means "period of a thousand years").

Where is the devil during these 1000 years (Revelation 20:1-3)?

\_\_\_\_\_ The devil will be put in "prison" during the entire millennium! Will 1 Peter 5:8 be true during the kingdom age? \_\_\_\_\_ Is it true today? \_\_\_\_\_ Since the days of Adam and Eve, Satan has been causing

trouble on this earth. But during the Kingdom age he will have no more influence upon the earth. We will study more about this later on in this chapter.

### **7) The barren lands will become fruitful.**

In Isaiah 32:15 we learn that the wilderness (desert) will be a F \_\_\_\_\_.  
F \_\_\_\_\_. This new look is also described in Isaiah 35:1-2. For a desert to blossom and bloom, it is necessary to have plenty of water. Will God provide plenty of water for the deserts (Isaiah 35:6-7)? \_\_\_\_\_

### **8) Sickness and disease will be cured.**

Sickness and disease are very much a part of our world today. Is the King, the Lord Jesus Christ, able to do something about the problem of sickness and disease (Matthew 4:23-24)? \_\_\_\_\_ The person who lives in the Kingdom will not say, "I am \_\_\_\_\_" (Isaiah 33:24). In that day the deaf shall hear and the blind shall see (Isaiah 29:18 and see also Isaiah 35:5-6). Citizens of the coming Kingdom will enjoy wonderful health.

### **9) People will live on and on, even for hundreds of years.**

Today if you were to meet a man who was a hundred years old, would you call him an old man or a child? \_\_\_\_\_ Isaiah 65:20 describes the Kingdom. This verse speaks of a child who will be 100 years old! In Isaiah 65:22 we learn that the days of people will be like the days of a TREE. Did you know that many trees live to be hundreds of years old? People living in the kingdom will live on and on. During the Kingdom age, Jesus Christ will sometimes punish sinners with the death penalty (see Isaiah 65:20), but if people follow Christ's laws and do not get in trouble with the King, then they will live on and on. Most will live through the entire Kingdom age and be older than Methuselah (see Genesis 5:27)!

### **10) There will be a change in the nature of animals.**

This amazing change is described in Isaiah 11:6-9 and 65:25. Is this true of animals today? \_\_\_\_\_ Today, what would happen if you put a wolf and a lamb together? Today, what would happen if you put a poisonous snake and a young child together? Even the animal kingdom will be changed for the better! Prior to the kingdom age, was there ever a time in the history of the world where animals were vegetarians, and none of them were flesh-eaters (Genesis 1:30).

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There are certain people today who believe that we are living in the kingdom age today! There are those who say that the Church is the Kingdom and the Kingdom is the Church. This cannot be so. We have just studied ten things that the Bible says will be true during the Kingdom age, and NOT ONE OF THESE TEN THINGS IS TRUE TODAY! All of these things will be literally fulfilled IN THE FUTURE when Jesus Christ is on the throne of this earth.

How does the Kingdom dispensation relate or compare with the other six dispensations which we have already studied? Consider the following:

## 1) INNOCENCE

The dispensation of Innocence and the dispensation of the Kingdom are similar in many ways. In both dispensations man enjoyed a wonderful world and an ideal environment. It must have been delightful to live in Eden before the fall and it will certainly be a joy to live in the Kingdom. Adam and Eve lived in a wonderful world that was created by God and unspoiled by sin. Future citizens of the Kingdom will live in a wonderful world that will be ruled by God.

One advantage that Adam and Eve had was that they did not have hearts that were sinful. As we shall see, those living during the Kingdom age will still have sinful hearts (that is, those in their natural bodies). Future citizens of the Kingdom will have an advantage over Adam and Eve. This is because they will not have the presence of the devil to influence them in the wrong way. Satan will not be released from his “prison” until the thousand years are over (Revelation 20:7). More will be said about this later on in this chapter.

## 2) CONSCIENCE

During the dispensation of conscience we are told that “the \_\_\_\_\_ of man was \_\_\_\_\_ in the earth” (Genesis 6:5). During the Kingdom age the opposite will be true. In that day RIGHTEOUSNESS will be great in all the earth (Isaiah 11:4-5). Open rebellion and wickedness will not be tolerated by the King. Men may rebel against the King in their hearts, but they will be very reluctant to do so outwardly.

## 3) HUMAN GOVERNMENT

During the Kingdom age the world will be under the best government possible. The GOD-MAN will be on the throne. He is the ideal King and the perfect Ruler. Our world has never known a perfect government. Human rulers have always failed. Jesus Christ will succeed.

## 4) PROMISE

God has made many promises to the nation Israel. God’s Word cannot fail and God’s promises cannot be broken. It is during the Kingdom age that God’s promises to the nation Israel will find their final fulfillment. During the Kingdom the following will be true:

Israel will be a great nation (compare Genesis 12:2).

Israel will be under God’s rich blessing (compare Genesis 12:2).

The Jews will be looked up to and respected more than any other people (Zechariah 8:23).

Israel will finally possess the land that God promised to them (Genesis 15:18).

Israel’s capital city will become the capital city of the world (Isaiah 2:1-3).

Another passage which describes how God will bless the nation Israel during the kingdom age is found in Jeremiah 31:31-34 (THE NEW COVENANT).

## 5) LAW

The Kingdom will not be an age of lawlessness (unlike the tribulation period, see [chapter 11](#)). On the contrary, it will be a day of strict law enforcement. Some of the people living during the

Kingdom age will be saved and will have God's law written in their H\_\_\_\_\_. (Jeremiah 31:33). They will have a heart for God and for God's law, and they will want to do what is right. Other people will be unsaved. Many of them will outwardly conform to the law because they will fear the punishment that will be given to lawbreakers. They will fear the King who rules with a rod of iron. Inwardly their hearts will be in rebellion against the laws of the King, but this rebellion will not express itself outwardly until the thousand years are over (see Revelation 20:7-9).

## 6) GRACE

The grace of God will be seen during the Kingdom Age. The King will still bear the marks of His death (Zechariah 12:10; 13:6 and compare John 20:25-27), reminding people of His gracious sacrifice for the sin of mankind. Also there will once again be animal sacrifices which will serve as a visual reminder of Christ's death on the cross (Ezekiel 40:39-43; 43:18-25; etc.). Also the New Covenant is an example of God's grace at work (see Jeremiah 31:34), as God will forgive the sins of the Jews according to the riches of His grace. God will also be able to point to members of His Church as "trophies" of His grace:

"That in the ages to come (including the Kingdom age) He might show the exceeding riches of His \_\_\_\_\_ in His kindness toward \_\_\_\_\_ (including all those living today who are saved by grace) through Christ Jesus" (EPHESIANS 2:7)

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In summary, the Kingdom will be a time of ideal conditions on the earth. The world will be free from so many of the problems that plague our society today, such as war and crime and disease and poverty. The world will be characterized by RIGHTEOUSNESS. Perfect government will be enjoyed by all. The nation Israel will finally enjoy the blessings which God had promised long ago. It will be a "better world" in so many ways!

## Only Saved People Will Enter the Kingdom

When the thousand year Kingdom begins, only saved people will be allowed to enter the Kingdom. Jesus will say to these saved people, "C\_\_\_\_\_, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the \_\_\_\_\_ prepared for \_\_\_\_\_ from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34). What will happen to unsaved people (Matthew 25:41)?

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We learn the same thing in Matthew 13:41-42. These verses tell us that all the wicked people will be removed from the earth and cast into a furnace of fire. Who will remain on the earth to be part of the Kingdom--the righteous people or the unrighteous people (Matthew 13:43)?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ According to Matthew 13:49-50 the angels will separate the wicked from among the just (righteous people) and the wicked will be cast into the \_\_\_\_\_ of fire.

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These verses teach us that when the kingdom begins, every person on earth is a saved person. The wicked (unsaved) are removed but the righteous (saved) remain. At that time every person on earth will be able to say, "I HAVE TRUSTED JESUS CHRIST TO BE MY SAVIOUR AND MY KING!"

## 2. MAN'S RESPONSIBILITY

During the Kingdom age countless numbers of children will be born. One thousand years is plenty of time for thousands and thousands of people to be born and to grow up into adults. Today many babies die because of sickness or hunger, but this will not be true during the Kingdom. Healthy babies will be born all over the world and these babies will grow up into adults.

As we have seen, the first babies that are born will have saved parents. Does having saved parents automatically make the baby saved? \_\_\_\_\_ Today if a person has Christian parents, does this mean that he becomes a Christian at birth? \_\_\_\_\_ Salvation is not something that parents can give (pass on) to their children through birth (John 1:13). Parents can teach their children about salvation but each child must believe on Christ for himself. Parents may have faith in Christ but they cannot pass on their faith to their offspring. [Someone has said, "God has many children but no grandchildren."]

Salvation is not given (passed on) from parents to children, but there is something that is given (passed on) from parents to children: SINFULNESS! Even though parents might be saved, they still have sinful natures which they pass on to their children. David understood this when he said, "Behold, I was shapen in \_\_\_\_\_; and in \_\_\_\_\_ did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). Every child that has ever been born (except Jesus Christ) has received a wicked and sinful nature from Adam. People are not born saved. People are born in sin. Those who will be born in the kingdom will be born with wicked, sinful hearts.

What must a person do to be saved (Acts 16:30-31)?

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\_\_\_\_\_ Children born in the kingdom have a RESPONSIBILITY to believe on Jesus Christ. They have a RESPONSIBILITY to trust the King and allow the King to rule in their heart. Some of these children will believe on Christ but many others will not. Outwardly they will obey the King and follow His rules, but inwardly they will be against the King (compare Mark 7:6). These unsaved people may bend down on their knees before the King but in their heart they are still standing up. Children sometimes do this with their parents. Outwardly they do what Mom and Dad say because they fear the punishment that will come if they do not obey. Inwardly they are angry at their parents. Has this ever happened to you? Is God concerned just with our outward actions or is He also concerned with our inner heart attitude (Psalm 51:6)?

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Even during the Kingdom age God will have enemies on earth. Even though these enemies do not want to, they will submit to the King and obey Him. They will be afraid to disobey Him because of His power and greatness. They will pretend to honor Him and serve Him and they will do what the King says even though in their hearts they are His enemies!

## 3. MAN'S FAILURE

Even during the Kingdom age there will be some people who will *outwardly* do what is wrong. Will the King bring swift punishment to such people (Isaiah 65:20)? \_\_\_\_\_ What will the King do to those people who refuse to worship Him at Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:16-17)?

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\_\_\_\_\_ During the Kingdom age it will not pay to disobey.

The greatest failure is seen by what happens after the thousand years are over. At the end of the thousand years, what does God do to Satan (Rev.20:7)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Will people follow Satan (Revelation 20:8)? \_\_\_\_\_ How many people will follow Satan in this great final rebellion? Is it possible for a person to count the number of grains of sand at the seashore?

\_\_\_\_\_ Is it possible for a person to count all the people who will follow Satan at the end of these thousand years (Revelation 20:8)? \_\_\_\_\_ When Satan is released from his “prison” he finds men’s hearts as *prone* to evil as ever (“prone” means leaning toward, having a natural bent toward, inclined to”). He *easily* gathers the nations together to battle against the King!

Remember, these people had years of opportunity to put their trust in Jesus Christ the King. They never did this. At the end of the thousand years they proved how sinful their hearts really were! The rebellion that was on the inside was allowed to come to the outside so that it could be clearly seen! Man’s sinful heart was fully EXPOSED and brought to light!

#### 4. GOD’S JUDGMENT

What will happen to these people who follow the devil (Revelation 20:9)?

\_\_\_\_\_ Will God have a difficult time bringing an end to this rebellion? \_\_\_\_\_ It never pays to rebel against God. What will happen to the devil who will deceive these people (Revelation 20:10)? \_\_\_\_\_ The devil, at that time, will enter his eternal home (compare Matthew 25:41). The next events that will take place are these:

1. ***THE FIRE JUDGMENT*** -- The old heaven and earth will be burned up (2 Peter 3:10-13 and compare Revelation 20:11).
2. ***THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT***-- This is where unbelievers of every dispensation will be raised up to stand before the God whom they have rejected (Revelation 20:11-15). More will be said about this in the next chapter.
3. ***THE NEW HEAVEN AND EARTH***-- This is where our study of the dispensations ends because we pass out of TIME into ETERNITY (Revelation chapters 21-22).

### Important Lessons To Learn

#### 1. Man has no one to blame for his problems except himself!

Man has always tried to blame someone else or something else for his problems. Did Eve put the blame on someone else (Genesis 3:13)? \_\_\_\_\_ Did Adam put the blame on someone else (Genesis 3:11-12)? \_\_\_\_\_ Men have been shifting the blame ever since.

The Kingdom age proves that man cannot blame anyone but himself. Often men try to blame society for their problems: “All you need to do is to eliminate poverty, build better homes, rid the world of sickness, remove crime from our streets, etc., and if we do these things all our problems will be solved. If we could only have a perfect environment to live in, this would be

the answer! Man is basically good but it is our bad society that makes man so bad.” Can man blame society during the kingdom age? \_\_\_\_\_

Man will not be able to blame the government because there will be a perfect government. He will not be able to blame poor education because the world will have the best education possible. He will not be able to blame his problems on ignorance because the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord (Isaiah 11:9). He will not even be able to blame Satan, because during the thousand years Satan will have no influence over the earth, and yet men still will refuse to be saved!

The Kingdom age demonstrates that man can point the finger of blame only at *Himself!* HE AND HE ALONE IS TO BLAME!

## 2. Man’s basic problem is sin.

The Kingdom age will demonstrate the truth of Jeremiah 17:9--“The heart is \_\_\_\_\_ above all things and desperately \_\_\_\_\_ (incurably sick).”  
Man has a heart problem!

As we study the Kingdom age we learn that the best conditions in the world do not change the heart of man. A man can be fed, clothed, cured of all disease, put in a nice home, given an excellent education and placed in an ideal society, but this does not change his heart ! Only Jesus Christ can change the heart of man. The Kingdom dispensation demonstrates what every other dispensation has demonstrated: MAN’S BASIC PROBLEM IS SIN and until sin is dealt with a person’s problems remain. If Christ Jesus is received as Saviour and Lord and if He is given control of the heart, then external problems and conditions will not be in the way of enjoying the living God.

***IF THE HEART IS NOT RIGHT BEFORE GOD, THE BEST CONDITIONS IN THE WORLD WILL NOT DO ANY GOOD.***

***IF THE HEART IS RIGHT BEFORE GOD, THE WORST CONDITIONS IN THE WORLD WILL NOT DO ANY HARM.***

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## 3. Jesus Christ is the only Saviour!

The Kingdom age will be the grand demonstration that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour. Society is not the Saviour. Good government is not the Saviour. Perfect environment is not the Saviour. Education is not the Saviour. All of these things are good, but none of these things is the real answer to the need of the human heart. The people who will take part in the final rebellion (Rev. 20:7-9) will have all of these things but they will not have the most important thing: *a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.*



SIN IS THE PROBLEM. JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY SOLUTION!

**LIFE IS SHORT.**

**DEATH IS SURE.**

**SIN THE CAUSE.**

**CHRIST THE CURE!**

Have you let the only Saviour do a saving work in your heart?

**Supplemental Material on the Kingdom**

"There be some standing here which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom" (Matthew 16:28).

**When was this literally fulfilled?**

There are many today who wrongly believe that most of the prophecies of the Bible were fulfilled in our around 70 A.D. with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. They look upon prophecy as something that is already fulfilled, not as something that is yet future. They especially do this when it concerns prophecies pertaining to the second coming of Christ. Theologically, these people are known as preterists.

The above passage of Scripture (Matthew 16:28) refers to Christ coming in His kingdom. Preterists believe that these words of Jesus were fulfilled in 70 A.D. That Jesus did not come in His kingdom in 70 A.D. is demonstrated by the following:

There are at least ten things that must take place at or around when Christ comes in His kingdom. Consider the following:

1. When Christ comes in His kingdom, He will return to earth and be seen by every eye (Matthew 24:25-30 and Revelation 1:7).

This did not take place in 70 A.D. In 70 A.D. Christ was not seen by anyone.

2. When Christ comes in His kingdom, the Jewish people will be regathered from every country on earth and brought into their promised land (Matthew 24:31; Jeremiah 16:14-15; Isaiah 43:5-7; Jeremiah 23:7-8; Jeremiah 31:7-10; Ezekiel 11:14-18; Ezekiel 36:24).

This did not take place in 70 A.D. Instead of being regathered, the Jews were killed and scattered.

3. When Christ comes in His kingdom, there will be no wars on earth (Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3; Psalm 46:9; Zech. 9:10).

This did not take place in 70 A.D. In 70 A.D. it was a time of fierce warfare executed by the powerful Roman army.

4. When Christ comes in His kingdom, the kingdom will be restored to Israel (Acts 1:6) and the Messiah will sit on the throne of David which will be located in Jerusalem (Isaiah 9:7; Jeremiah 17:25; 23:5-6; 33:15; Hosea 3:4-5; Amos 9:11-15; Luke 1:32-33).

This did not take place in 70 A.D. In 70 A.D. Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple destroyed and no King from the line of David was reigning on the throne!

5. When Christ comes in His kingdom it will be a time of great deliverance and great blessing for the Jewish people (Jeremiah 30:7-9; Ezekiel 34:25-31).

This did not take place in 70 A.D. which was a time of great judgment upon the Jewish people who decades earlier had crucified their Messiah and rejected Him (although some Jews did believe on Him).

6. When Christ comes in His kingdom, God's sanctuary (His temple) will be in the midst of His people (Ezekiel 37:26-28; Ezekiel 40:5-43:27).

This did not take place in 70 A.D. because it was then that the Jewish temple was destroyed resulting in the Jews having no temple at all.

7. When Christ comes in His kingdom, there will be a priesthood operating in the temple and animal sacrifices will be offered (Ezekiel 44:1-46:24).

This did not take place in 70 A.D. because when the Romans destroyed the temple they put an end to a functioning priesthood and they put an end to animal sacrifices.

8. When Christ comes in His kingdom, "the Jews will possess and settle in all of the promised land, and it will again be subdivided into the twelve tribal divisions. But these tribal divisions will be different than those describes in the book of Joshua" (Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, *Footprints of the Messiah*, p. 328). The description of the location of all of the 12 tribes during the kingdom is described in Ezekiel 47:13-48:29. Seven tribes will be situated to the north of the temple (Ezekiel 48:1-7) and five tribes will be situated to the south of the temple (Ezekiel 48:23-29).

This did not take place in 70 A.D. After the Roman destruction of Jerusalem the surviving Jews were scattered throughout the world until the 20th century when a small remnant returned to the land of Israel and a Jewish state was established.

9. When Christ comes in His kingdom, there will be a message of good news that will be declared to Jerusalem (Isaiah 52:7-10). This message involves the following elements: 1) The good news of peace; 2) The good news that Messiah will reign in Zion; 3) The good news that God has comforted His people; 4) The good news that God has redeemed Jerusalem.

This did not take place in 70 A.D. In 70 A.D. there was only bad news for the Jewish people. It was the bad news of judgment and destruction and ruin and death.

10. When Christ comes in His kingdom there will be joy and gladness (Isaiah chapter 35). This joy and gladness will result from the following conditions: 1) the desert will become fertile (verses 1-2, 6-7); 2) Messiah will come to deliver Israel (v. 3-4); 3) Those who are lame or blind or deaf will be healed (v. 5-6); 4) Wild vicious animals will no longer be a problem (v. 9); 5) It will be a time of great rejoicing (v. 10).

This did not take place in 70 A.D. In 70 A.D. the Jews who were fortunate enough to survive the Roman invasion did not have joy and gladness, but only sorrow and sighing (compare Isaiah 35:10).

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It is important to see when Matthew 16:28 was literally fulfilled. To find a literal fulfillment we need only look to the next chapter (Matthew 17), where we find that the "some standing here" refers to Peter, James and John and "seeing the Son of man coming in His kingdom" refers to the transfiguration. This is confirmed by 2 Peter 1:16-18 where the transfiguration is said to be "the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The transfiguration was a marvelous preview of the Lord's future coming in His kingdom majesty.

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## **The Problem of the Preterist View**

Preterism is the viewpoint which understands most or all prophecies relating to the Lord's second coming (including the prior tribulation period) to have already been fulfilled in 70 A.D. with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. The Bible teachers who have embraced this theory have abandoned the literal and normal understanding of God's Word, especially as it relates to the prophetic portions of the Bible.

Use your imagination, and suppose you were an Israelite living in the days of Esther during the time of the Persian empire (about 470 B.C.). One day you come across several Hebrew scrolls which happen to include the books of Isaiah and Micah (both written approximately 700 years before Christ's birth). As you read through these sacred books, you discover some amazing prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah:

But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting (Micah 5:2).

Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14).

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given (Isaiah 9:6).

Now suppose a Jewish friend of yours comes along and you share with him your excitement: "Isn't it wonderful that God promised to someday send the Messiah into the world?" But to your amazement, your friend does not share your same expectation. He says this:

My friend, I'm sad to say that you have misunderstood these prophecies. These prophecies are not predictions about what is going to happen in the FUTURE, but these are predictions that have already been FULFILLED in the past. You see, those of us who have great insight into the real message of the Bible understand that these predictions were fulfilled at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. It was at this time that the Messiah came in judgment. These prophecies are all about the Messiah's coming in judgment during the days of Nebuchadnezzar. Even though it's true that no one saw the Messiah at that time, yet nevertheless, that is when He came. You should not expect Him to come in the future because He has already come. In fact, Isaiah told us that His coming would soon take place: "Howl ye; for the day of the LORD is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty" (Isaiah 13:6). Obviously this was referring to the soon coming event of the Babylonian destruction, not to some far off future happening. Anyone living today who is living in the expectancy of a far off, future coming of the Messiah is sadly misguided and has totally failed to understand the Bible.

Hopefully everyone reading the above would recognize the folly of understanding prophecy in such a way. Yet, today there are many people in the Reformed camp who have embraced preterism and are telling us much the same thing as in our imaginary story. The great prophecies of our Lord's second coming, we are told, have already been fulfilled in the past, in 70 A.D. with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Even though no one saw Christ return at that time, yet this is when He returned in judgment!

The great truths of prophetic Scripture: the coming of the Lord for His saints (1 Thess. 4:13-18), the great tribulation (Revelation 4-19), the second coming of Christ, the kingdom reign of the Messiah (described in great detail by all the prophets)--all these are denied by those who relegate all prophecies to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. Hundreds of prophecies are cancelled out by this method under the bewildering supposition that they have already been fulfilled.