



Basic Bible Course

by Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

Establishment of the KINGDOM of GOD



Lesson Thirteen

INTRODUCTION: Having previously shown that **ALL COMMANDMENTS** bound by God **BEFORE CALVARY** came to an **ABRUPT END** at the **CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS CHRIST**, in Lesson 12 we learned that a **NEW** commission was commanded by Him following His death, burial and resurrection. This new, great, all-encompassing, world-wide commission Jesus declared to be by **ALL AUTHORITY**, both **IN HEAVEN** and **IN EARTH**. Once of force it was to remain in effect **UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD**. We saw that it was implemented for the first time on the **DAY OF PENTECOST IN ACTS 2**. From that day onward the **NEW TESTAMENT** Jesus had been preparing while on earth was of force. No longer were the people taught to follow Moses or even John the Baptist, but Jesus Christ.

Thus we must conclude that an hiatus in God's revealed will to mankind was reached on that great and notable day of Pentecost in Acts 2. Just **HOW** great and notable it was we shall soon see. For it was upon **THAT DAY**, as we shall learn in our current study, that the **KINGDOM OF GOD**—foretold by prophets and preached by John and Jesus as “at hand”—was finally established.

It is one thing, however, to **ASSERT** this fact; it is quite another thing to **PROVE** it is so. It shall be the design of this study to show conclusively that all Scripture dealing with the kingdom of God prior to Pentecost in Acts 2 prophesied toward its coming, that all scriptural conditions for its coming were met on that day, and that from that day onward the Scriptures consider the kingdom as **NO LONGER FUTURE** but as **ALREADY IN EXISTENCE**. Thus scriptural **PROPHECY** concerning the kingdom of God suddenly transforms into **HISTORY** at this point...

I. THE PROPHET DANIEL'S INTERPRETATION OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR'S DREAM.

(Read Daniel 2:1-44).

- A. Some 600 years before Christ there lived a king called **NEBUCHADNEZZAR, KING OF BABYLON** (Dan. 1:1).
 1. **BABYLON**, at that time, had extended its empire, until its rule was **WORLD-WIDE**.
 - a. Thus **ALL THE KINGS OF THE EARTH**, other than Nebuchadnezzar, were **SUBJECT UNTO HIM**.
 - b. Nebuchadnezzar was a **KING OF KINGS**.

- B. In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar began having dreams, which troubled his spirit so he **COULD NOT SLEEP** (Dan. 2:1).
1. He decided to **TEST** his magicians, astrologers, sorcerers and the Chaldeans with his dreams (v. 2).
 2. Calling them before him, Nebuchadnezzar required that they tell him
 - a. What his **DREAM** was, and
 - b. What was their **INTERPRETATION** thereof (vv. 2-9).
 3. The Chaldeans reasoned that **NO MAN ON EARTH** could comply with such a requirement (vv. 10-11).
 4. In his anger, Nebuchadnezzar decreed that all the wise men of Babylon should be **DESTROYED** (vv. 12-13).
 5. Daniel, a child of Israel, to whom God had given knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom, had **UNDERSTANDING** in all **VISIONS** and **DREAMS**. (See Dan. 1:17).
 6. Daniel asked the king to **GIVE HIM TIME** and he would **SHOW THE INTERPRETATION** of his dream (2:14-18).
 7. In a night vision, the **SECRET WAS REVEALED** unto Daniel (v. 19).
 - a. For this Daniel thanked God (vv. 20-23).
 8. Daniel **PLEADED THAT THE LIVES OF THE WISE MEN BE SPARED** for he would show the interpretation unto the king (v. 24).
 9. Daniel was **BROUGHT BEFORE THE KING** for this purpose (vv. 25-30).
- C. **DANIEL TELLS NEBUCHADNEZZAR WHAT HE HAD DREAMED** (vv. 31-35).
1. He said the king had seen a **“GREAT IMAGE.”**
 2. This image’s **HEAD** was of **GOLD**.
 3. His **BREAST** and **ARMS** of **SILVER**.
 4. His **BELLY** and **THIGHS** of **BRASS**.
 5. His **LEGS** of **IRON**, his **FEET PART OF IRON** and **PART OF CLAY**.
 6. A **STONE** was **CUT OUT WITHOUT HANDS**, which **SMOTE THE IMAGE UPON HIS FEET** that were of iron and clay, **BREAKING THEM IN PIECES**.
 7. Then the **IRON, CLAY, BRASS, SILVER** and **GOLD** were **ALL BROKEN IN PIECES TOGETHER**.
 - a. They became like chaff.
 - b. The wind carried them away.
 8. The **STONE** that smote the image **BECAME A GREAT MOUNTAIN**, and **FILLED THE WHOLE EARTH**.
- D. **DANIEL INTERPRETS THE DREAM** (vv. 36-45). He foretold there should be **FOUR GREAT KINGDOMS IN SUCCESSION**.
1. The **FIRST** of these kingdoms was Nebuchadnezzar’s own **BABYLONIAN EMPIRE**.
 - a. He describes Nebuchadnezzar as a **“KING OF KINGS.”**
 - b. His **DOMINION** was so vast that **“whosoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven”** God had given into his hand, making him ruler over all.
 - c. **NEBUCHADNEZZAR** was the **“HEAD OF GOLD”** (v. 38).
 2. **AFTER** Nebuchadnezzar **“another kingdom” INFERIOR TO HIM WAS TO ARISE** (v. 39)...**“Breast and arms of silver.”**
NOTE: World history shows that the NEXT KINGDOM following Nebuchadnezzar’s BABYLONIAN empire was the MEDO-PERSIAN EMPIRE.

3. “Another THIRD kingdom” was to follow, “which shall bear rule over all the earth” (v. 39)...“Brass”...
NOTE: After the Medo-Persian empire fell, world history shows it was the GRECIAN EMPIRE which supplanted it under ALEXANDER THE GREAT.
4. The FOURTH kingdom (iron) was to be strong as iron (v. 40); but whereas feet were part iron and part clay, it would be partly strong and partly broken (v. 41-43).
NOTE: World history shows the FOURTH—and last—WORLD-wide kingdom was that of the ROMAN EMPIRE, which followed the Grecian.
5. Daniel says that “IN THE DAYS OF THESE KINGS” (i.e., in the days of the FOURTH kingdom, the ROMAN EMPIRE) the GOD OF HEAVEN should SET UP “A KINGDOM” (v. 44).
 - a. Once set up, this kingdom should NEVER BE DESTROYED.
 - b. God would not leave this kingdom to “other people.”
6. This new kingdom should BREAK IN PIECES and CONSUME all these other kingdoms aforementioned.
7. This kingdom should STAND FOREVER.

NOTE: Thus we have it clearly prophesied by Daniel, six centuries before Christ, that GOD was going to SET UP “A KINGDOM” in the days of the ROMAN EMPIRE. The Roman Empire began in the century immediately before Christ, had its principal power during the succeeding five centuries, gradually declining and finally falling following its division into the Eastern Empire and the Western Empire in A.D. 395. So sometime within the period between 100 B.C. and A.D. 395, we must search the scriptures for the establishment of the kingdom of God. It was during this period, of course, that John the Baptist came preaching, “Repent ye: for the KINGDOM of heaven is AT HAND” (Mat. 3:2).

- II. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM WAS YET FUTURE IN A.D. 30.
 - A. That was the year John preached the kingdom as “at hand” (Mat. 3:2).
 - B. The expression “at hand” is defined as “approaching” or “drawing near.”
- III. JESUS CHRIST THAT SAME YEAR ALSO PREACHED THE KINGDOM AS “AT HAND” (Mat. 4:17).
 - A. He taught His disciples, in His model prayer, to pray “THY KINGDOM COME” (Mat. 6:10).
NOTE: If it had come already, they should not have prayed thus. Since Jesus taught them to PRAY for its coming, it is evident THE KINGDOM WAS YET FUTURE AT THAT TIME.
 - B. Jesus said that some of those He addressed in Matthew 16:28 should NOT DIE until they SAW the SON OF MAN (Christ) coming “IN HIS KINGDOM.”
 - C. Jesus told those in Mark 9:1 that some of them should not die till they SAW the KINGDOM OF GOD COME.
 1. It was to come “WITH POWER” (Mark 9:1).
 2. The “POWER” was to come IN JERUSALEM (Luke 24:49).
 3. They were to receive “POWER” when the HOLY SPIRIT should come upon them (Acts 1:8).
- IV. ALL THE PROPHECIES CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM WERE FULFILLED ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST IN ACTS 2.
 - A. The kingdom was to be established in THE DAYS OF THE FOURTH WORLD-WIDE KINGDOM, the ROMAN EMPIRE; ACTS 2 was IN THOSE DAYS.

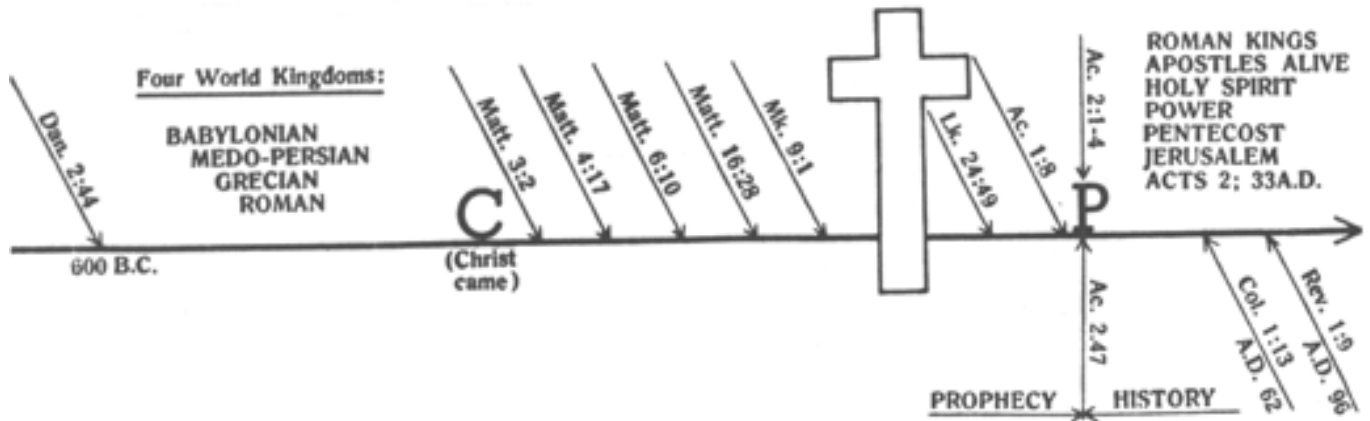
- B. Whereas Judas had hanged himself, others to whom Jesus addressed Himself were STILL ALIVE, including the OTHER APOSTLES.
- C. When the DAY OF PENTECOST was fully come, the HOLY SPIRIT came on the Apostles (Acts 2:1-4).
 - 1. The fact is enough to prove that SOME HAD NOT DIED as yet. (Compare Matthew 16:28 and Mark 9:1).
- D. When the HOLY SPIRIT CAME ON THEM, they were given “POWER.”
 - 1. They could SPEAK IN OTHER LANGUAGES THEY HAD NOT LEARNED (Acts 2:4, 6, 8).
- E. This “POWER” was to be endued them in the city of JERUSALEM.
 - 1. That is where they were when it happened. (Compare Acts 2:5 with Luke 24:49).

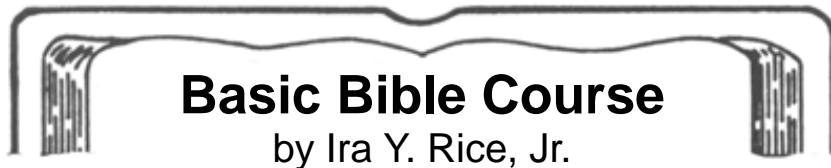
NOTE: From the foregoing it follows therefore that the KINGDOM PROPHESED BY DANIEL more than 600 years before, was finally “SET UP,” BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM, ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST, ACTS 2.

- V. FROM PENTECOST IN ACTS 2 ONWARD THE KINGDOM IS NEVER AGAIN REFERRED TO AS SOMETHING YET IN THE FUTURE, BUT AS SOMETHING IN EXISTENCE, HENCE ESTABLISHED.
 - A. Paul said to members of the church at Colosse that God had TRANSLATED HIM AND THEM out of “the power of darkness...into the KINGDOM of his dear Son” (Col. 1:13).
NOTE: This was written by Paul during his imprisonment in A.D. 62-63. Paul and the Colossians COULD NOT HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED INTO THE KINGDOM IF THE KINGDOM WAS NOT YET IN EXISTENCE AT THAT TIME.
 - B. John, to the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 1:4) told them he was their brother and companion in tribulation and “IN THE KINGDOM” (See v. 9).
NOTE: Here again is something impossible to be true, unless THE KINGDOM WAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED AT THAT TIME (A.D. 96).
- VI. GOING BACK TO PENTECOST IN ACTS 2, IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE KINGDOM GOD “SET UP” AND THE CHURCH JESUS “BUILT” WERE ONE AND THE SAME.
 - A. In Matthew 16:18-19, after Jesus told Peter, “upon this rock I will build my CHURCH” He promised in the succeeding verse to give to him “the keys of the KINGDOM of heaven.”
 - B. In Acts 2, when the KINGDOM was established (proved foregoing), the people who responded to Peter’s preaching, upon being baptized, were “added” to something (v. 41).
 - C. That something they were ADD TO was called “the CHURCH” (v. 47).
CONCLUSION: It follows, therefore that the CHURCH Jesus built must have been the KINGDOM that the God of heaven was to “SET UP.”
 - D. Daniel said the kingdom should “NEVER BE DESTROYED.” Jesus said the “GATES OF HELL CANNOT PREVAIL AGAINST” the church.
 - 1. Why the similarity of expression?
 - 2. Because they are one and the same.
 - E. Jesus not only is “HEAD” of the CHURCH, whose “BODY” is comprised of the MEMBERS of the church (Eph. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 12:12-27); but He also is “KING OF KINGS” (Rev. 19:16).
 - 1. Being “KING” He must have a KINGDOM. (Col. 1:13; Rev. 1:9)
 - 2. MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH make up that KINGDOM (Heb. 12:28).
 - 3. MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH are “KINGS” (1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6).

4. JESUS MUST REIGN OVER HIS KINGDOM until death is destroyed (1 Cor. 15:24-28). Then He shall DELIVER UP the kingdom to God.

NOTE: Please study this chart in connection with the lesson until you are sure you understand both the chart as well as the lesson. VERY IMPORTANT...





**Establishment
of the
KINGDOM of GOD**



Questions on Lesson Thirteen

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

REFERENCE NO. _____

GRADE _____

1. How many kingdoms did the God of heaven purpose to “set up”? (Dan. 2) _____
2. During what WORLD kingdom was GOD’S kingdom to be established? _____
3. Once set up, would God’s kingdom ever be destroyed? _____
4. What effect would God’s kingdom have on the world kingdoms described by Daniel?

5. How long did Daniel say God’s kingdom should stand? _____
6. What did John the Baptist say of the kingdom to indicate it was yet future when he spoke?

7. Define what is meant by the term “AT HAND”: _____
8. In Jesus’ model prayer to His disciples, what makes you know that God’s kingdom was yet future at that time? _____
9. In Matthew 16:28 and Mark 9:1 Jesus taught that His kingdom would come while some of His hearers were still alive. State His exact words to this effect: _____

10. What further thing did Jesus say should accompany the coming of the kingdom? (Mark 9:1)

11. WHEN was the “power” to come? (Acts 1:8)

12. WHERE was the “power” to come? _____
13. Did they receive “power” when the Holy Ghost came upon them in Acts 2? _____
If so, WHAT power? _____
14. What day was it when the power came? _____
15. WHERE were the apostles when they received this power? _____
16. Was it “IN THE DAYS OF” kings prophesied by Daniel? _____
17. Were the prophesies fulfilled for God’s kingdom to be established on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2?

18. Do Scripture references AFTER Acts 2 indicate the kingdom as something YET FUTURE or as something ALREADY IN EXISTENCE? _____

- 19. Could Paul or John be in the kingdom, if the kingdom did not exist? _____ If so, how?

- 20. What is the kingdom set up by the God of heaven in Acts 2? _____

DO YOU HAVE A QUESTION? _____

