

Carolina Conference

Churches of God of the Abrahamic Faith



*This is what the Lord says:
“Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient
paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and
you will find rest for your souls.*

Jeremiah 6:16

Who We Are

We are a group of loving, friendly Bible believing people, ready to be a friend to you and your family. We want you to experience this same warm spirit of love and friendship as we take the Gospel to the World.

The following are participating congregations in this ministry.

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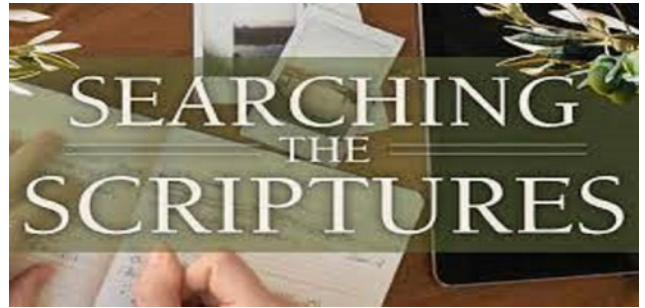
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What We Believe

1. There is One God, Who is the Creator and Father of all mankind. Isa. 44:6-8; Eph. 4:6; I Cor. 8:6
2. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he died for our sins, was buried and rose again from the dead. John 20:31; Acts 8:37; I John 5:5
3. The Holy Spirit is the power of God working in believers through Jesus Christ. Rom. 8:9,14
4. The Bible is God's inspired Word which shall be the guide and practice of the Christian. I Pet. 1:21; II Tim. 3:16,17
5. Man is wholly mortal and only through Christ can man receive the gift of immortality. I John 5:12; Rom. 5:12; Rom. 6:23
6. God's love and grace offers to man a plan of salvation through Jesus Christ including complete forgiveness of sin and immortality at the return of Jesus Christ. John 3:16; Phil. 3:20,21; John 1:7-9
7. Man's response to God through Jesus Christ will be: believe the gospel, confession of faith, baptism by immersion in the name of Jesus, growth in Christian life. Rom. 6:4-6; Acts 2:38
8. Jesus Christ is coming again to resurrect the dead, bestow the gift of immortality upon all believers, and establish the Kingdom of God. I Thess. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:51-57; Rev. 11:15

TRUTH? WHAT IS TRUTH?

Arlen F. Rankin



A reflection on the age-old question, “What is truth?”

Truth is true - even if no one knows it.

Truth is true - even if no one admits it.

Truth is true - even if no one agrees what it is. Truth is true - even if no one follows it.

Truth is true - even if no one but God grasps it fully.

In that I was reminded that we are living in a post-modern society which accepts all ideas that could be called “truth” as relative and transient; that what is “truth” for one person may not be “truth” for another for there is no objective or absolute truth. Call it human gullibility or naivete, or propensity to sin or what, truth is often not seen because of pre-conceptions, bias, carelessness, etc.

In that also I was reminded that if one hears or repeats a lie often enough and long enough it begins to take on the appearance of truth; a validity in itself. It must be remembered that when you mix truth with lie, you still end up with a lie. This is the nature of deception for deception requires something to have “the ring of truth.” The more truth that is mixed with the lie, the “better” the lie is because it is more likely people will believe it. The more correctness there is in a counterfeit the more effective it becomes in deceiving the casual, non-discerning person. The longer and louder the lie is spoken the more people will buy into it. But the fact remains that truth is more than our subjective feelings or impulses, or impressions. Truth does have an objective existence. It consists of that which is real, consistent and absolute.

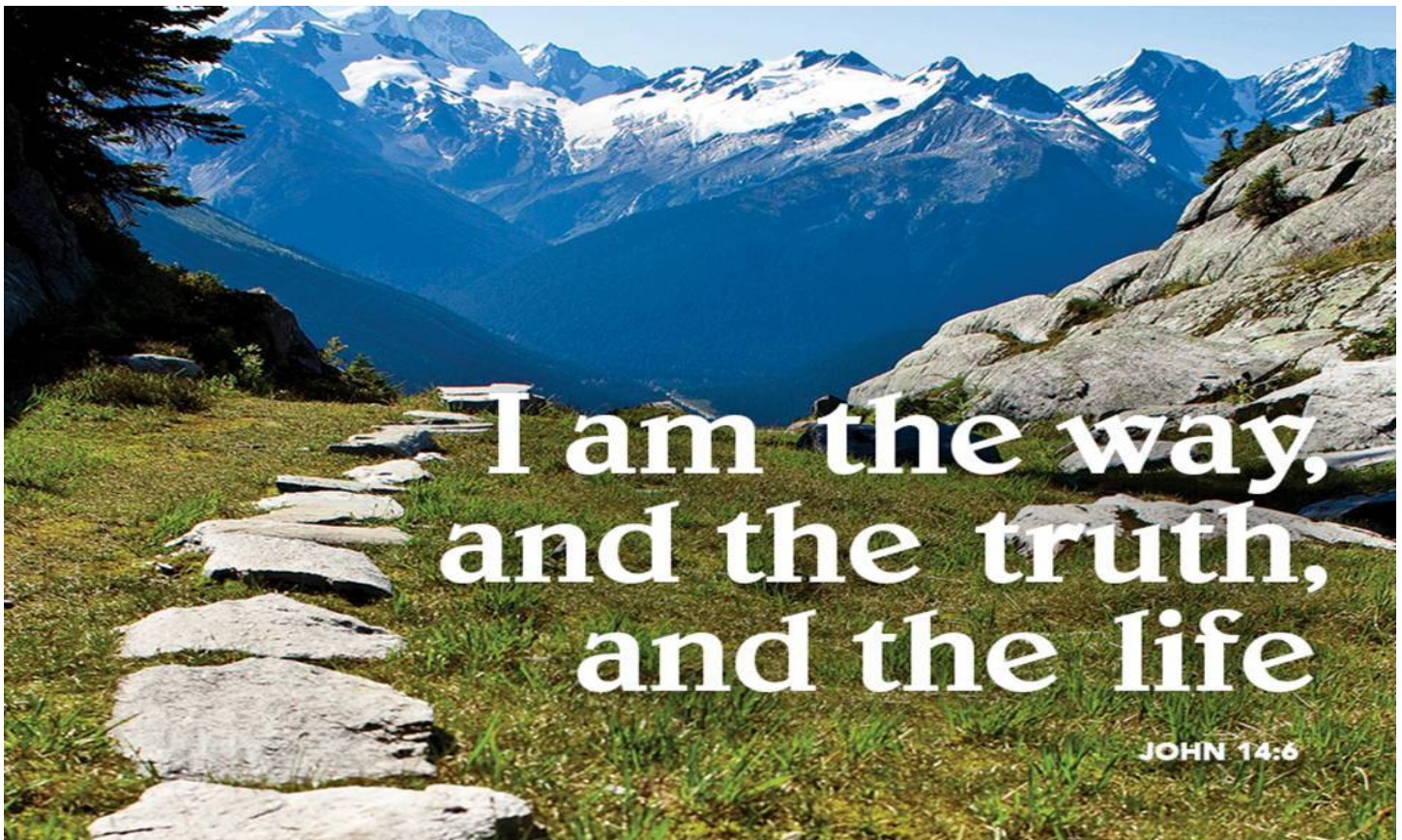
Some things simply cannot be changed and do not change just because men do not want it to be so. Note that Paul says of his kinsmen in the flesh, their minds are blinded by a veil that is not removed so that even when the Scriptures are read they will not understand what is read because they don’t want to. A saying that my mother used to

Seek the **TRUTH**

repeat was, “There are none so blind as those that will not see.” So it is with many who regard not the truth but hold to their traditions or creeds, or personal opinions. To

the Thessalonians, the apostle wrote, “they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 Thes. 2:10). When in fact, “God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto He called you by our gospel” (2 Thes. 2:13, 14).

We are told that a time will come when there would be an increase in knowledge (Dan. 12:4), of which time Paul, men will be “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Tim. 3:7). Why? Among other things, they will be “highminded” (v. 4, KJV) or “swollen with conceit” (ESV). Further they will seek teachers who speak only what they want to hear, for they will not endure sound teaching and shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables” (2 Tim. 5:3, 4). These are those who are “tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Eph. 4:14). We are in those days of exponential information and sundry ideologies. We are in a day when the challenges of sound reasoning and studious research is imperative for the child of God. We ought to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thes. 5:21). When we need to check all teachings out by comparison to the Word of God and so accept or reject (Acts 17:11; Isa. 8:20; 1 John 4:1-6). There is a war for the minds of ourselves and our children. It behooves us to be diligent in study and discerning in believing.



WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

SCOTT ROSS

The Bible is filled with great questions that cause us to consider some of the great questions of life itself. One of those great questions is that posed by Jesus himself when he asked his closest followers, “Who do you say that I am?” How we answer that question can have eternal implications.



As Jesus began his public ministry about the age of 30 in the region known as Galilee, he began to teach and preach concerning the Kingdom of God and he began to heal people of all manner of diseases. This drew much attention and interest from people. They noted that he taught as one who had authority, and not as the teachers of the law.

Jesus challenged some of those who listened to him to leave what they were doing and come and follow him, and several did. This close group of followers began a journey of discovery. One time when Jesus and these followers were in a boat – a fierce storm arose and Jesus was asleep. They woke him and Jesus spoke “Quiet, be still” and incredibly the wind and waves obeyed him.

“Who is this? Even the wind and waves obey him!” they asked. It was apparent that this was no ordinary man. He was more than a carpenter, more than a healer, more than an amazing Rabbi. But who was he?

And Jesus often spoke in riddles and mysteries. He did not straightforward tell them what they ought to believe, but instead led them to a path of discovery. This all comes together in Matthew 16 when Jesus asks this great question, “Who do you say that I am?”

Leading up to this great question, Jesus asked another: “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” (verse 13). Their responses: John the Baptist who had been beheaded by Herod, and some thought he had some back to life in the form of Jesus Others thought he might be Elijah – who many believed would come before the coming of the Messiah or Christ Others thought Jeremiah or one of the other Old Testament prophets (verse 14).

That is a pretty easy question to answer – who do people say Jesus is. Some say he is a fraud. Some say he is a good man, a great teacher like Buddha or Mohammed. Others say he is God, the second person of a trinity. You can find a wide variety of responses to what people say about Jesus.

And it is easy to answer because it is not personal. It does not involve your own personal opinion. It is like the difference between the questions “Who do you think will be president?” and “For whom are you going to vote?” One is just an observation, an opinion. The second is personal and involves something of a commitment.

Jesus’ first question led naturally to his second when he looked his disciples in the eye and asked, “But what about you – who do you say that I am?” (verse 15). This became personal – and the answer involved articulating what was being formed in their minds. The answer was a public commitment of sorts. ‘This is what I believe.’

Peter’s responded to Jesus question (verse 16) “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” There are two important parts to Peter’s answer. First, “You are the Christ” and second, “You are the Son of the living God.”

“Christ” is not just Jesus’ middle name like “Scott Henry.” Christ was a title that meant something to Peter and the other disciples. “Christ” means anointed in Greek and was the common term for Messiah.

In Psalms 2 the promised deliverer, the Messiah, is call God’s “Anointed One.”

- 1 Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?
- 2 The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the LORD and against his Anointed One.
- 3 “Let us break their chains,” they say, “and throw off their fetters.”
- 4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs the Lord scoffs at them.
- 5 Then he rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath,
- 6 “I have installed my King on Zion, my holy hill.”



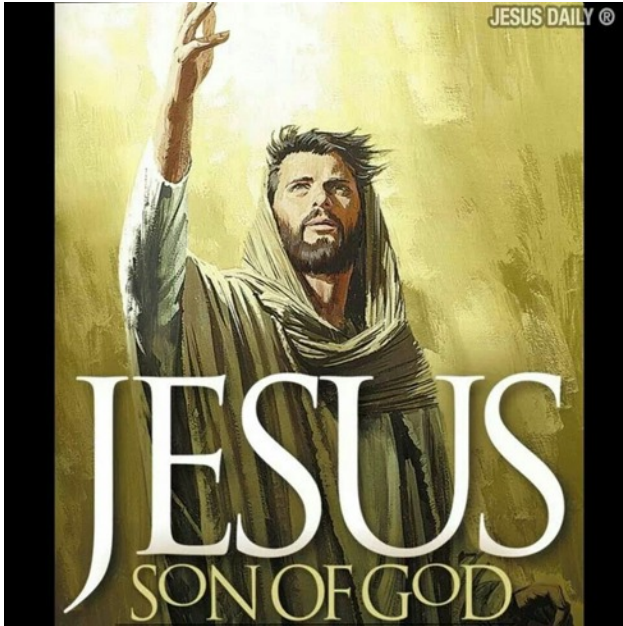
Isaiah 42:1 says, “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.

In fact that Old Testament is filled with promises of a deliverer to come. The people of Israel were waiting for this anointed one who God would install as deliverer and king.

So as Peter ponders Jesus question, he answers, “I believe you are the promised Messiah.” Peter came to understand and believe that this coming delivered for whom the people of Israel had long hoped was

none other than Jesus. It was a tremendous declaration of faith.

The second part of Peter's response is equally important – "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. The disciples began to understand that this was not an ordinary man. They sensed and realized and now knew for sure and were able to articulate that Jesus was none other than the very Son of God. Jesus was different – that they knew – and Peter clearly stated why – because he was the very Son of God



Jesus revealed to them who and what God was like. He was the perfect reflection of God – because he was the very Son of God. I am not sure they knew and understood his unique birth at this time. I know they did not grasp that he would be the perfect and sufficient sacrifice for sins Nor did they understand how God would declare with power and glory that Jesus was the Son of God by the resurrection of the dead. But they knew, they believed, and they declared their faith that he was the very Son of God.

And what was the alternative, what other explanation would be sufficient – Jesus is the very Son of the living God.

It is important also to notice Jesus' response to Peter's declaration: "Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven (Verse 17). Notice that Jesus affirms this truth.

By saying "my Father in heaven" Jesus affirms he is the Son of God. By saying "Blessed are you" for this answer Jesus shows he is pleased by Peter's response. By declaring that this answer is not just a collection of men's opinions but an answer given to Peter by God, himself Jesus affirms that this response is correct.

I think this is the clearest statement, the best expression, the preferred answer to the question "Who is Jesus?" Jesus is the promised Messiah. Jesus is the very Son of God.

It is interesting what Jesus does not say. He does not say, "Oh Peter, that is close, but it is not quite right. I'm more than the Son of God. I am actually the second person of a trinity. I am actually God himself." Jesus does not say that! Yet if that is true (as so many in Christendom want to claim) would not Jesus have corrected Peter at this point. But Jesus does not seek to change Peter's response at all.

We don't have to go beyond this answer either. Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. This is the correct answer. This is the God revealed answer. This is who Jesus is. There is no need to complicate it and confuse it with concepts no one can understand. Jesus accepted Peter's answer and so should we.

So if we believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the very Son of God – how does that truth impact us? It must be more than just head knowledge.

First, since Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of God, we must trust him as Savior. Only the Son of God would be a sufficient sacrifice for our sins. Only his righteousness, bestowed upon us when we trust him as Savior gives us any hope.

Second, if he is Messiah and the Son of God, we need to trust him not only as Savior but also as Lord. He is the one we can and ought to follow. We ought to try to model our lives after Jesus. Because of who Jesus is, we are to put him first place in our lives. As we face situations in life, we ought to ask ourselves, “What would Jesus do?” and “What would Jesus say?” and “How would Jesus respond?” And this is what we should do and say and how we should respond.

Third, Jesus is our hope that sustains us. The Messiah will come and establish God’s kingdom of righteousness. Justice will prevail – wrongs will be righted – peace will reign – the sick will be healed – the dead will be raised – “Even so, come, Lord Jesus!” I reckon the suffering of this present age is not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.

Finally, He is the Messiah and Son of God and the only hope for the world. Therefore we have good news to share about him. We have a mission and a calling – we need to proclaim him and share him with all we know.

There are three questions I challenge you to consider.

First – what do people today think and say about Jesus?

Second – who do you say that he is?

And third – what are you going to do about it?



THE 'KING OF KINGS' IS COMING!

Pastor Michael Brown
Greenville SC Church of God

From his Good News blog
<https://thegoodnewsherald.wordpress.com/>

The “No Kings” rallying cry for protests across the United States just recently gained a lot of attention in the news.

Certain groups pushing back against what they assert is the “authoritarian, militarization of democracy and billionaire-first politics,” organized protests in thousands of cities throughout the United States on June 14. (MSN) This movement intentionally coincided with the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Army, President Trump’s 79th birthday, and Flag Day.

The protest was largely political. It was in opposition to recent policies by the current administration that demonstrators believe threaten democratic norms and civil liberties. (Austin American-Statesman) It was reportedly intended to also reflect America’s founding in opposing monarchy and that the country not be ruled like a kingdom. (MSN)

Two days before on June 12 when preparations for “No Kings” were being publicized, President Trump reportedly declared he doesn’t feel like a king adding, “I have to go through hell to get stuff approved.”

Sources say the comment was made when a reporter is said to ask him about his overturning of a California mandate concerning a ban on new gas-powered vehicles and electric-powered vehicles by 2035. (USA Today)

I share this news with you because the cry of those who say, “No Kings” reminds me of the Bible and what it says about the REAL King, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. One may or may not agree with the “No kings” protestors—their political views and actions. However, when it comes to King Jesus, that is truly something different. Here’s why according to the Good News....

Jesus was in God’s plan of salvation from before creation including his Kingdom which was prepared, “from the foundation of the world,” (Matthew 25:31-34).

God promised the King of his Kingdom to come through the bloodline of Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3; 17:1-8), his son, Isaac (Genesis 17:18-19; 26:2-5), and Isaac’s son, Jacob whose name was changed to Israel (Genesis 28:13-15; 32:28; 35:10-12), through

his son, Judah (Genesis 49:10), which would eventually come through the royal bloodline of King David (2 Samuel 7:12-16; 1 Chronicles 17:7-14).

Jesus was prophesied to be Heir and King according to the prophets who were directly inspired by God's Power, the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:1-12; 7:14; 9:6-7; Jeremiah 33:15-26; 23:5-6; Micah 5:2; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

And thus, as God's Anointed One (a.k.a., Messiah or Christ—(Luke 4:18; Matthew 16:16), Jesus has a legal as well as a moral right ordained by God to the throne of David (Luke 1:32, 33, 35).

Jesus' position as King dovetails with his two other positions—Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15-18; Acts 7:37) and Priest (Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 5:5-10; 7:1-3). His three-fold ministry has not ceased but will continue on through his coming reign as King.

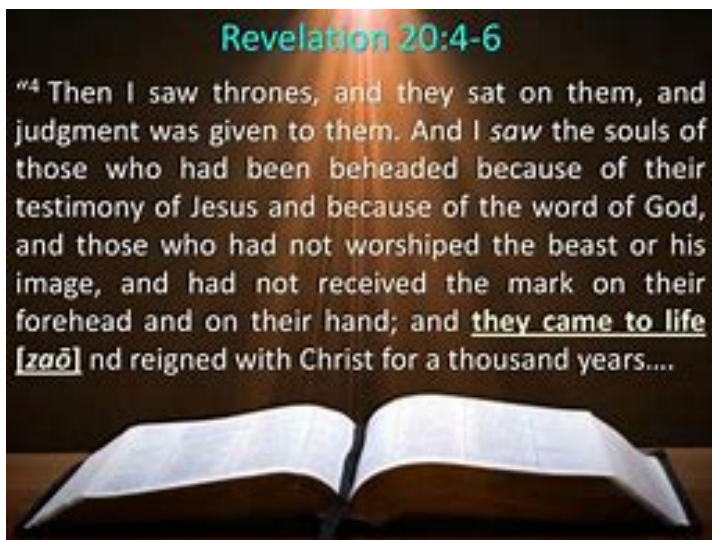
The Kingship of Jesus also plays an integral part of his three-fold ministry—his earthly ministry, heavenly ministry, and new earthly ministry. Jesus' earthly ministry included his sacrificial death, and glorious resurrection. When Jesus ascended to the right hand of God's throne he entered his heavenly ministry which includes his work through the Church by the Power or Holy Spirit of God. In his new earthly ministry, which will commence at his return from heaven, Jesus will be reign as King of kings, and Lord of lords over all the earth (2 Peter 3:10-13; Revelation 1:5; 5:9-10; 11:15; 17:14; 19:11-16).



As Dr. Alva G. Huffer wrote, "Christ, the King, was anointed at His baptism; He was coronated at His ascension; and He will be enthroned when he returns. Jesus receives His kingly authority from God alone. Sometimes Christians talk and sing about their crowning Christ as King and Lord. In reality, only God has the authority of kingship to give to Jesus. When one speaks of man's crowning of Christ, he means that man recognizes the fact that God has crowned Christ." (Systematic Theology, p. 516, Atlanta Bible College publishers. copyright, 1960.)

Christ's coming as King will be glorious and powerful (Matthew 24:30); visible and known to all (Acts 1:11; Revelation 1:7); victorious and dramatic accompanied by the angels of heaven like an army (Revelation 19:14). It will also be sudden and unexpected compared to "a thief in the night" (Matthew 24:43) and, therefore, we need to be spiritually ready at any time looking for him to return (Matthew 24:44; Luke 21:34-36).

The purpose of Jesus to return as King includes (1) raising the dead in Christ and those in Christ, still living at the time of his coming, to eternal life (Romans 6:22-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58) who will reign as his co-heirs in his kingdom (Romans 8:17; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 5:10); (2) regathering the people of Israel together to their promised land, for their conversion to Christ, and exaltation among all nations (Amos 9:14-15; Ezekiel 39:25-29; Zechariah 8:7-23; Romans 11:11-27); (3) reigning for 1,000 years (a.k.a., "the millennium"; Revelation 20:1-6) (4) establishing his kingship over the nations, forging justice and peace worldwide (Psalm 2:8; Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3; Daniel 7:13-14; Revelation 19:15-21); (5) replacing all earthly kingdoms with his government (Zechariah 14:9; Revelations 11:15); (6) bringing harmony and beauty in the environment and nature (Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25; 35:1,2,6,7; 55:12-13; Ezekiel 36:33-35; Acts 3:20-21); (7) no more sickness; longevity of life (Isaiah 33:24; 35:5-6; 65:17-19; Revelation 21:4).



After the 1,000 years of Jesus' reign, God's final judgment will occur. Of various events to occur at that time, the Bible says the rest of the dead who were not in the first resurrection will be raised to life and judged before the great white throne of God. At that time unbelievers will be judged according to their deeds and sentenced to destruction in the lake of fire, known as, "the second death," (Psalm 37:20; Malachi 4:1-3; Matthew 7:13; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 20:5-6; 21:7-8).

While the sentiment of those who cry, "No kings," gets a lot of attention in this restless world, there's one King, Jesus Christ, who deserves everyone's attention. He's the King we should all say, "Yes," to. In fact, one day, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad," 2 Corinthians 5:10, NASB).

Believers in Christ (Acts 2:38-39; Galatians 3:27-29) gladly welcome the entrance of the "King of kings" into their hearts in this life with a view toward the glorious age to come when he literally reigns forevermore as THE King on David's throne in Jerusalem. That's our "blessed hope" (Titus 2:11-14) when...Protests will turn into praises! Turmoil will dissolve into peace! Righteousness will prevail forevermore!



LESSON 11*

KINGDOM PARABLES OF JESUS

M. Repentance

Memorize Luke 16:10, 11.

Of all the parables uttered by Christ the largest class is that which teaches the need of repentance. The seven in this lesson evidently were spoken primarily for that purpose, and we also find it strongly flavoring many of those in the preceding lessons. From this it is at once apparent that if men are ever to enter the righteous kingdom of the Christ, it is imperative that they abandon their unrighteous ways of living.

His scathing denunciations of wickedness in every shape and form amazed His friends and terrified His enemies. Four parables, spoken against the Jews, condemned their hypocrisy, their obstinate unbelief, their proud exclusiveness, and their rebellious and murderous hearts.

These are:

The Two Sons (Matt. 21:28-32).

The Wicked Husbandmen (Matt. 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20: 9-18).

The Unrobed Wedding Guest (Matt. 22:1-14).

The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:14-31).

In the parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16:142) and that of the unfruitful fig tree (Luke 13:5-9) we have one thought in common, that of faithfulness to a trust, of fruitfulness in service.

In the parable of the unmerciful servant (Matt. 18:23-35) Peter was taught that he could not enter the kingdom and be forgiven his sins without himself forgiving others. And neither can we.

How many parables of Jesus have repentance as the dominant theme? What significance do you assign to this fact?

Interpret the parable of the wicked husbandmen; of the unmerciful servant; of the unprepared wedding guest; of the unfruitful fig tree.

What was the occasion for the parable of the rich man and Lazarus? What is the outstanding lesson it teaches?

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