

1. Last week when the clock tolled 10:45 we had just finished a study of the Greek phrase βασιλεια Θεου translated “the kingdom of God.”
2. Before continuing, I want to give you opportunity to use 1Jo 1:9 as may be necessary.
3. Let’s begin with an expanded translation of Gal 5:19-21.

Gal 5:19 Understand the production from the Old Sin Nature is certainly seen in various sexual sins, such as adultery, filthy thoughts, and shameful sexual conduct ...

Gal 5:20 idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, inordinate ambition, dissension, factions ...

Gal 5:21 envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

4. One cannot understand the meaning of “the kingdom of God” unless an understanding of what Israel missed when they rejected Christ’s Kingdom message. An acceptance of the message would have brought about the four unconditional covenants.
5. Before reviewing the covenants, let’s review some of that learned last week:
6. The people of our Lord’s day expected their Messiah to come in shining armor, to muster an invincible army to defeat the hated Romans. They had no expectation of a Church Age, Tribulation or Millennium. What they did expect can best be understood by a simple chart:

GENTILES				ISRAEL	KINGDOM
Positive Volition	Negative Volition	Noah’s Family	Jewish Patriarchs	Jewish Client Nation	+
Creation of man	Fall of Adam	Flood	Abraham	Moses and the Exodus	Birth of Christ

7. It should be borne in mind that the Kingdom requirements as stated in the Sermon on the Mount are meant to prepare the way for the earthly Davidic Kingdom when it shall be established on the earth, when the four unconditional covenants will be implemented.



8. It may be concluded that the term "kingdom of heaven" as used in the early ministry of Jesus referred to the Messianic earthly Kingdom seen in the Old Testament. As has been noted, the Jewish preachers needed no instruction in the details of that message.

9. It was the hope of their nation, and it was addressed to that nation alone. Israel's Kingdom was faithfully offered to them by their King at His First Advent and repeatedly rejected by our Lord's generation. Unfortunately, Israel did not display an acceptance and obedience as set forth in Deu 30:1-3.

Deu 30:1 When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you ...
 Deu 30:2 and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today,
 Deu 30:3 then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you.

10. Repentance and change therefore, became an imperative part of the message concerning the Kingdom. The Kingdom as foreseen in the Old Testament had ever in view the righteousness in life and conduct of its subjects; had Israel accepted Christ's kingdom message; the New Covenant would have taken care of all the difficulties associated with the impossible standards demanded by Christ's platform.

11. First let's look at a small sample of impossible standards and then we will review the method of fulfillment.

11.1 The IMPOSSIBLE STANDARD – Sermon On The Mount

Mat 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Mat 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Mat 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God ...

Mat 5:21 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.'

Mat 5:22 But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment ... in danger of the fire of hell ...

Mat 5:27 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.'

Mat 5:28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart ...

Mat 5:31 "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.'

Mat 5:32 But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

Mat 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors ...

Mat 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

Mat 6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

Mat 6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Mat 6:22 The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be healthy, thy whole body shall be full of light.

Mat 6:23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Mat 6:24 No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Mat 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

Mat 7:2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

Mar 11:25 And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

12. The METHOD OF FULFILLMENT will be the New Covenant. Keep in mind the New Covenant is one of four unconditional covenants which will be implemented in the Millennium for the benefit of a recovered Israel: They are: The Abrahamic, the Palestinian, the Davidic and the New.

The New Covenant:

Jer 31:31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:

Jer 31:32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:

Jer 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

13. Let me again give you a quote from Lewis Sperry Chafer regarding the Kingdom Age.

“When reading a Gospel (particularly a synoptic gospel) the Church Age believer must keep in mind to whom these books have primary application-Israel. According to the Scriptures, all time is divided into ... dispensations. Due recognition of the essential character of each of these dispensations is the key to the understanding of the Bible ... The fact of confusing ... the characteristics ... in each is common, and is, doubtless, the greatest error into which many devout Bible interpreters fall.”

14. Now back to Paul’s last phrase “shall not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.”

15. In heaven there will be a Kingdom of Heaven without sin or evil.

16. There will be nothing but perfect people in heaven. All those entering will be changed before entry. Believers will be perfect in body, soul and spirit.

17. Now let’s see what we can learn about the fruits of the Spirit.

Faith a Fruit of the Spirit

1. Faith in Christ alone is not only the way of salvation but (an essential) fruit of the spirit and especially difficult to come by when things “turn south.” There are times when we all doubt and think God has somehow forgotten us.

Habakkuk a Case Study

1. In an Old Testament passage, Habakkuk wants God to wake up and help His people.

Hab 1:2 How long, O LORD, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you,

"Violence!" but you do not save?

Hab 1:3 Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds.

Hab 1:4 Therefore the law is paralyzed, and justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, so that justice is perverted.

1.1 Habakkuk was written by Habakkuk from Judah. The prophet identifies himself with the condition and circumstances of the people of God. It is Habakkuk who wonders why the evil prosper and the righteous suffer. God rebukes him for his self-serving message.

1.2 Nothing is known of Habakkuk except what may be inferred from his book which bears his name. He is described as "the prophet," and it is possible, therefore, that he not only had the gift of prophecy but that he was one of a professional group of prophets.

1.3 It is precarious to say much about the prophet's character on the basis of his writing. His name seems to derive from a Hebrew root meaning "to embrace."

1.3.1 Jerome (fifth century A.D.) stated that the prophet was called "The Embracer," either because of his love for God or because he wrestled with God.

2. Date of Writing

2.1 The book was most likely written in c. 650.

2.2 There are those who believe the book was written in c. 350 and thus the invading hosts described in the first chapter of the prophecy are not the Chaldeans but the Greeks under Alexander the Great.

2.3 Note the Babylonians are specifically mentioned in Hab 1:6. Which Babylonians however is not established but given our hindsight and historicity of Nebuchadnezzar's invasions and dispersions I think c. 650 is the better date.

Hab 1:5 "Look at the nations and watch -- and be utterly amazed. For I am going to do something in your days that you would not believe, even if you were told.

Hab 1:6 I am raising up the Babylonians, that ruthless and impetuous people, who sweep across the whole earth to seize dwelling places not their own.

2.4 The most satisfactory conclusion seems to be that the prophecy was written at a time when the Chaldeans or Babylonians were beginning to become restive against the Assyrian power. Let me review the **Doctrine of Babylon**.

Doctrine of Babylon

1. In the accounts of ancient history, the name "Babylon" occurs again and again, usually as a reference to a specific geographical location in the area of Iraq.

2. Historical Babylon is situated approximately sixty miles south of Baghdad on the banks of the Euphrates River near the present town of Al Hillah. The city of Babylon was the ancient capital of the Babylonian Empire.

3. The word "Babylon," as found in Scripture, has several connotations.

4. Not only does it refer to a particular city but also to a religious system so abhorrent to God that He will eventually destroy it completely (Rev 17, 18 and 19).

5. In the Old Testament, the term "Babylon" is given as "Babel," a derivation of the Hebrew root Balal, and means "to confound" or "to confuse."

6. God did not see fit to disclose the specific location of Old Testament Babel or eschatological Babylon; yet we are told that both had been built in the land of Shinar, more commonly known as southern Babylonia.

7. The oldest extant tower has been excavated at Erech (Gen. 10:10) and dates from the latter part of the fourth millennium B.C. Although the Bible does not identify the original Tower of Babel as a temple tower, later such edifices were used as such.

8. From archaeology and extant Babylonian cuneiform we know that the concept of religious Babylon has existed since the time of the great Flood.

8.1 All temple towers were dedicated to the various guardian deities in an attempt to assure their protection or to placate hostile gods of the pantheon.

9. Throughout its long history, Babylon has been the political center of many Gentile nations, and its prominence can be traced to approximately 2000 B.C.

9.1 As near as can be determined, the Sumerians were the first major inhabitants of Babylonia after the early descendants of Nimrod and Cush.

10. The most important ruler of the First Dynasty of Babylon was the remarkable Hammurabi (1728-1686 B.C.). Prosperity, as well as advances in literature, astronomy, mathematics and architecture, characterized his reign.

11. As was the case of Jerusalem, Babylon had its share of conquerors. Several generations after Hammurabi, Babylon came under the rule of first the Hittites, then the Kassites, and later the Elamites.

12. In 745 B.C. the yoke of the Assyrian Empire was felt, and the city itself was sacked and looted by Sennacherib in 689 B.C. Esarhaddon, Sennacherib's son, rebuilt the city about eleven years later.

13. When the Chaldean Empire was united under Nabopolassar in 625 B.C., Babylon became its capital city.

14. Under his heir, Nebuchadnezzar, this oft fought-over piece of real estate reached the height of its glory and became the most glamorous city of the ancient world.

14.1 In his turn, Nebuchadnezzar contributed vast fortifications, wide streets, canals, stunning temples and palaces.

14.2 Not the least of his beautifications were the Ishtar Gate and the famous Hanging Gardens (considered by the ancient Greeks to be one of the seven wonders of the world).

15. Yet the future of this once magnificent city was far from secure; it would be vanquished again and again.

16. On October 13, 539 B.C. Babylon fell to the army of Cyrus the Great of Persia. Later it was partially destroyed by Xerxes I of Persia (486-465 B.C.) in retribution for their continued rebellion.

17. I have described for you briefly how the Medo-Persians conquered the "impregnable" city. Before leaving our study of Babylon the Great let me provide a series of points from Merrill F. Unger's Bible Dictionary which will document much of that which I have earlier related.

18. All of this to answer the question "how could Babylon be taken without a shot being fired?" I shall quote from Unger's Dictionary:

"First to be considered was the geographical fact that the Euphrates River flowed through the center of Babylon. According to the Greek historian, Herodotus, a large bridge spanned that river and connected the eastern and western sections of the city. Another Greek writer, Diodorus Silucus, reveals that a tunnel had been laid under the river bed. Numerous canals which existed on the outskirts of the city were used for irrigation purposes and also constituted a part of the defense system.

"In fact, all of southern Babylonia was laced with these canals whereby water could be diverted at will for the needs of the people. Second, was the engineering feat which Herodotus records of the Persians rerouting the Euphrates by constructing a dam some distance from the city. Thus the river was caused to flow around Babylon rather than through it. After this daring exploit, the Persian Army approached the fortifications by night. Because of the general state of lethargy which had lulled the population into a false sense of security, the army slipped past the sentries without difficulty. As you may recall from Daniel, Chapter five, Belshazzar's notorious banquet culminated in the shocking events of the handwriting on the wall.

"The evening had been characterized by debauchery and drunkenness, a condition which had permeated every social milieu in Babylon. Thus because of a distracted citizenry and a relaxed military vigilance, it was a simple task to march by way of the riverbed into the city proper! Babylon had once more been conquered. A decadent national entity and its ruler had been judged and replaced by another. (Dan. 2:21)"

19. God describes the ferocity of the invading army.

Hab 1:7 They are a feared and dreaded people; they are a law to themselves and promote their own honor.

Hab 1:8 Their horses are swifter than leopards, fiercer than wolves at dusk. Their cavalry gallops headlong; their horsemen come from afar. They fly like a vulture swooping to devour;

Hab 1:9 they all come bent on violence. Their hordes advance like a desert wind and gather prisoners like sand.

Hab 1:10 They deride kings and scoff at rulers. They laugh at all fortified cities; they build earthen ramps and capture them.

Hab 1:11 Then they sweep past like the wind and go on-- guilty men, whose own strength is their god."

Hab 1:12 LORD, are you not from everlasting? My God, my Holy One, we will not die. o LORD, you have appointed them to execute judgment; o Rock, you have ordained them to punish.

Hab 1:13 Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong. Why then do you tolerate the treacherous? Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those more righteous than themselves?

Hab 1:14 You have made men like fish in the sea, like sea creatures that have no ruler.

Hab 1:15 The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks, he catches them in his net, he gathers them up in his dragnet; and so he rejoices and is glad.

20. In Hab 1:16-17 we will find "They sacrificed to their sword and burned incense to their nets." What is meant is that the Babylonians ascribed divine honors to their weapons and, therefore, to themselves. They worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator. Habakkuk could see them coming long before they came.

Hab 1:16 Therefore he sacrifices to his sword and burns incense to his dragnet, for by his net he lives in luxury and enjoys the choicest food.

Hab 1:17 Is he to keep on emptying his net, destroying nations without mercy?

21. In Hab 2:1 we find the prophet's expostulation comes to an end. He seems now to slowly recognize his place as the clay before the potter; a man who is to live by faith and not by sight.

Hab 2:1 I will stand at my **watch** and station myself on the **ramparts**; I will look to see what God will say to me, and what answer I am to give ...

22. He had presented his complaint to God, but in faith, he is now prepared to wait upon the Lord, assured that an answer would come.

23. The assertion sometimes made that Habakkuk is the supreme example of an angry doubter perhaps has been over taught.

24. Indeed, his prophecy ends on a note of sublime faith.

25. It is one thing to face the problems that confront everyone who believes in a good and omnipotent God and ask why things are so, or how they can be so.

26. It is something quite different to question the divine righteousness or justice, or the very existence of God, simply because one does not agree with God's manifest destiny. Recall + R and Justice are two of the essences of God.

27. Habakkuk seemed inclined to only question why the condition and not the existence of a good and gracious God.

28. Several interpreters understand the rampart or watch tower (**Mishmar**) to be an actual tower or elevation built into the wall. Habakkuk may be using only a figure of speech.

29. Habakkuk records only his determination to wait for an answer; he does not know when it will come.

30. Verses 2:2-4 contain the Lord's answer to his now pliant prophet.

Hab 2:2 Then the LORD replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it.

Hab 2:3 For the revelation awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.

Hab 2:4 "See, he is puffed up; his desires are not upright--but **the righteous will live by his faith--**

31. Whether or not the prophet actually wrote the vision on tablets for public reading (Hab 2:2) has been disputed, but it is agreed that he was told to record the vision: and so we read in Scripture today.

32. The purpose of recording the vision is for an appointed future time. The timing of when someone on the watchtower would see off in the distance the coming of a mongrel horde had to await that date. What we do know is that Habakkuk did make a record of God's prophecy.

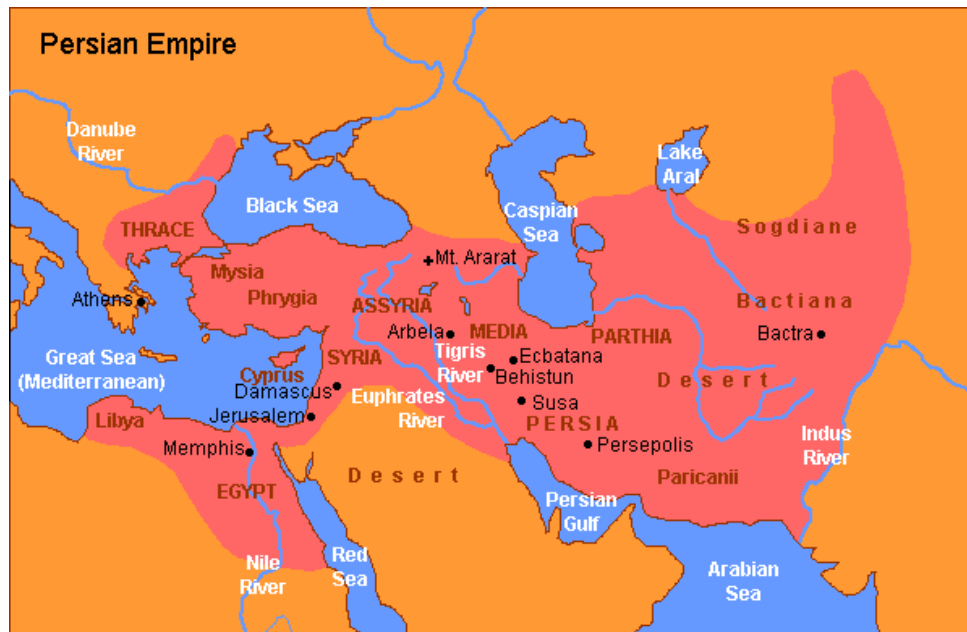
33. It would seem to be that the matter was to be made so clear that whoever would later read it might run and publish it or read it on the run from the meanest army ever.

34. That God will answer in the future and rebuke Babylon is a certainty but when it would occur was not revealed to Habakkuk. We can now say it took place in three stages: 606, 597 and then the ultimate defeat and destruction 586 B.C.

35. God demanded faith from Habakkuk, just as He does from us.

36. From hindsight we know not only when the defeat took place but also, we know when delivery and freedom would be bestowed and who would do it.

37. Babylon later falls when Persia becomes a world power under Cyrus the Great. The rise of Persia was not only predicted by Daniel in Daniel chapters two and four but so also did Isaiah and Jeremiah; Cyrus the great was even named as the first Persian king who would authorize the Jews to return to the land.



Isa 45:1 Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut;

Isa 45:2 I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron:

Isa 45:3 And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.

Isa 44:26 That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:

Isa 44:27 That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers:

Isa 44:28 That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

2Ch 36:22 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

2Ch 36:23 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the LORD God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The LORD his God be with him, and let him go up.

Ezr 1:1 Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

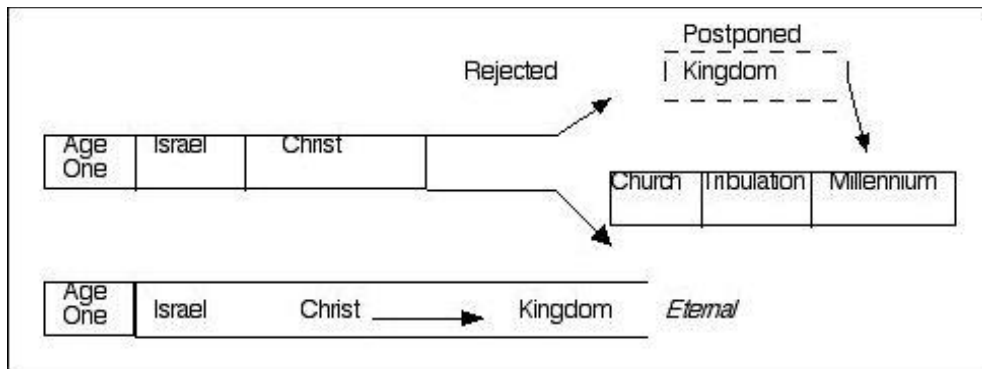
Ezr 1:2 Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

Ezr 1:3 Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem.

Ezr 1:4 And whosoever remaineth in any place where he sojourneth, let the men of his place help him with silver, and with gold, and with goods, and with beasts, beside the freewill offering for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.

38. Although the prophesy concerning Cyrus is most impressive; think of Daniel's predictions concerning Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, the Roman Empires and the Age of Christ.

39. So if Israel rejected the offered Kingdom; will they ever get another chance. A chart will best answer that question.



End Lesson

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