

The Reformation of the Kingdom of God

(Hebrews 9:10)

- I. Definitions.
 - A. kingdom: Kingly function, authority or power; sovereignty, supreme rule; the position or rank of a king, kingship.
 - B. power: II. As a person, body or thing. One who or that which is possessed of or exercises power, influence, or government; an influential or governing person, body or thing; in early use, one in authority, a ruler, governor.
 - C. The *kingdom* of God is the *government* of God.
 - D. government: The action of ruling; continuous exercise of authority over the action of subjects or inferiors; authoritative direction or regulation; control, rule.
 - E. Of particular interest for this study is the Messianic government. **ISA 9:6-7.**
 - 1. This prophecy spoke of a coming government/kingdom of God.
 - 2. This government would be Messiah's.
 - 3. This government's seat of authority would be David's throne.
 - 4. This government would be established with justice and judgment.
 - 5. This government would have a continuous form: *for ever*.
 - 6. God's zeal would make it happen, regardless.
- II. The kingdom of God is the kingdom of heaven: they are the same thing.
MAT 11:11 c/w LUK 7:28; MAT 13:11 c/w MAR 4:11; MAT 13:33 c/w LUK 13:20-21; MAR 10:24-25 c/w MAT 19:23-24.
- III. Scripture sets forth five things which are referred to as the *kingdom of God*:
 - A. God's universal rule over all creation.
 - B. God's elect, regenerate family.
 - C. The eternal, heavenly state of glory.
 - D. The O.T. nation of Israel.
 - E. N.T. churches of the resurrected God-man, Jesus Christ: the Messianic government.
- IV. Consider "kingdom of God" as it refers to His universal government over all of creation.
 - A. This embraces God's rule over all things in heaven and earth.
1CH 29:11-12; PSA 103:19-22.
 - B. This aspect of the kingdom of God has been from the beginning of the creation and endures for ever. Nothing ever is outside of this rule.
 - C. This aspect of the kingdom of God presently exists in the face of opposition.
ROM 8:21-22.
- V. Consider "kingdom of God" as it refers to His elect, regenerate family. God by His Spirit reigns in the *inner parts* of men. **ROM 5:17, 21 c/w COL 1:13; EPH 2:4-6 c/w EPH 1:19-23; JOH 3:5.**
 - A. Inclusion in this kingdom is based on the sovereign, electing purpose of God from before the foundation of the world. **EPH 1:3-6.**
 - B. Inclusion in this kingdom is not based upon creature obedience. **JOH 1:12-13; TIT 3:5.**
 - C. This kingdom knows no racial, national, genealogical, historical, social, class, sexual nor any other false boundary. **GAL 3:28; 6:15; COL 3:11-12; REV 5:9.**
 - D. This kingdom consists of saints of both testaments. **ROM 11:1-6; GAL 4:28-29.**
 - E. This kingdom's membership is secure, unalterable and eternal. **ROM 8:29-30; REV 22:5.**
 - F. This kingdom is at warfare with Satan, the world and the flesh. **ROM 7:22-23.**

- G. This kingdom is not organizational, hierarchical, geographical, tangible or visible. It is entirely the work of God the King in the inward part of the elect regardless of anything else.
 - 1. This kingdom is inward and spiritual. **LUK 17:20-21.**
 - a. observation: The action or practice of observing a law, covenant, set day, or anything prescribed or fixed; practical adherence to a custom, usage or rule.
 - b. This kingdom's advent is not tied to calendar, custom or ceremony. It is by the unseen free working of the Spirit according to His own will. **JOH 3:8.**
 - 2. This kingdom is God's working of salvation *in* man. **EPH 2:10; 1JO 3:9.**
- VI. Consider “kingdom of God” as it refers to the eternal, heavenly state. **2TI 4:18.**
- A. This is the ultimate inheritance of every elect child of God in Christ. **ROM 8:30; EPH 2:6.**
 - B. It will be fully realized at the Second Coming and Final Judgment. **MAT 25:31-34, 46.**
 - C. No form of corruption is permitted in this kingdom. **REV 21:7-8.**
 - D. The souls of saints who have died enter it presently. **LUK 9:30-31; 16:22; 23:43.**
 - E. Corrupt bodies of saints must be changed before they can enter this kingdom. **1CO 15:50-52.**
 - F. This kingdom has no warfare in it. It is a place of peace. **ISA 57:1-2.**
 - G. Regeneration is requisite and an earnest of this kingdom. **ROM 8:11.**
- VII. Consider “kingdom of God” as it refers to the O.T. nation of Israel.
- A. Israel was to be God's kingdom on earth, His peculiar treasure and nation. **EXO 19:5-6.**
 - B. It was an organized system of human government with citizenship requirements, a divine body of law (the Books of Moses), judicial system, an acceptable and necessary form of religion, a priesthood, geographical boundaries, military, etc.
 - C. Inclusion in this kingdom required that one be born to an existing family of this kingdom or converted to Israel's God (proselyte), circumcised if a male, etc. It was emphatically a racially oriented kingdom for which genealogies were critically important. **EXO 12:48-49; NUM 9:14; EZR 2:62.**
 - D. God was its King (**1SAM 12:12 c/w 8:7**) and, after Saul, then David's line.
 - E. This kingdom's continuance was conditional (**EXO 19:5**) and had a limited duration. **DAN 9:24.**
 - F. Regeneration was in no way a requirement for this kingdom.
- VIII. Consider “kingdom of God” as it refers to the earthly institution of N.T. local churches.
- A. During the time when national Israel was God's kingdom, a “kingdom of God” was prophesied to come. **DAN 2:31-45.**
 - B. In the days of the Roman empire (and right on schedule) John the Baptist and Jesus Christ announced that kingdom to be “at hand.” **LUK 3:1-2; MAT 3:1-2; MAR 1:14-15.**
 - C. This kingdom of God was a reality in their day. **LUK 16:16; HEB 12:28.**
 - D. Men were entering the kingdom by penitent baptism. **MAT 21:31-32 c/w LUK 7:28.**
 - E. The church is a kingdom founded upon Jesus Christ and the apostles. **MAT 16:18-19 c/w EPH 2:19-20; 1PE 2:5-6.**
 - F. Communion is a church ordinance observed in a kingdom. **LUK 22:29-30.**
 - G. This kingdom would never be destroyed. **DAN 2:44 c/w MAT 16:18; EPH 3:21.**
 - H. Proof of regeneration is a requirement for entry into this kingdom. **1JO 5:1 c/w ACT 8:37.**
 - I. Jesus is its King in heaven by virtue of His resurrection. **ACT 2:30-32.**
 - J. Race, circumcision, genealogy, etc. mean nothing here. **EPH 2:11-14; COL 3:9-11.**
 - K. This is an organized form of human government with a divine King, body of laws (the

- N.T.), judicial system, an acceptable and necessary form of religion, a priesthood (**1PE 2:5**), military (**2TI 2:3-4; EPH 6:13-17**), etc. with a heavenly capital city. **HEB 12:22**.
- L. Organizationally, this spiritual kingdom is visible.
1. It has a geographical location: Jerusalem, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, etc.
 2. It has citizenship. **EPH 2:19**.
 3. It has a census. **ACT 1:15**.
 4. It has conventions. **1CO 5:4**.
 5. It has judicial proceedings. **1CO 5:5**.
 6. It has state banquets. **1CO 11:20-26**.
 7. It has elections to office. **ACT 1:21-26; 6:3-5**.
 8. In this kingdom, the elect *work out salvation* according to what God worked in them in the kingdom of God which is regeneration (Sec. V, above). **PHIL 2:12-13**.
 - a. Only those who are of the regenerate family can do this. **ROM 8:7-8**.
 - b. The unregenerate may obtain membership in this kingdom but they all will eventually be separated out of it. **JUDE 1:18-19; MAT 13:40-41**.
 - c. Regenerate and unregenerate alike can lose their citizenship in this kingdom through sin. **1CO 5:1, 9-13**.
- M. This is the **ONLY** thing called “kingdom of God” that came into existence in the days of the Roman empire (**DAN 2:31-45**) when national Israel's clock was expiring (**DAN 9:24**) that endures as promised and shall continue in exalted form *forever*. **1CO 15:24; EPH 3:21**.
1. Mind that Daniel said that the coming kingdom of God would *not be left to other people*. **DAN 2:44**.
 2. A currently popular theory is that Daniel's prophesied kingdom is yet to come, is of a literal thousand-year duration, emphatically Jewish and will be delivered up to God to be shared by people of all nations.
 3. If the prophesied kingdom did not come at the proper time, did not endure forever, nor remain in the possession of those to whom it was given, then Daniel was a false prophet. **DEU 18:22**.
 4. What would this imply about Jesus Christ, Who cited Daniel in **MAT 24:15**?
 5. It should be remembered that Jesus Christ on at least two occasions rejected opportunities for a natural, earthly crown and throne. **MAT 4:8-10; JOH 6:14-15**.
- IX. This study is focusing on the reformation spoken of in **HEB 9:10** which can only apply to the kingdom of God as realized in a people uniquely blessed because of His rule through His given laws.
- A. reformation: Restoration (of peace). 2. Improvement in form or quality; alteration to a better form; correction or removal of defects or errors; (reparation, rebuilding).
 - B. reform: The amendment, or altering for the better, of some faulty state of things...
 - C. The kingdom of God as it existed in the nation-state of Israel would be changed for the better. The kingdom of God would continue in a new form.
 - D. Jesus Christ came not to offer the promised kingdom of God to the Jews but rather to take it away from them and give it to another people under a new system of government with upgraded operations: the New Testament of Jesus Christ. **MAT 21:33-43**.
 - (1) The Old Testament kingdom of God was governed by the law of Moses.
 - (2) The law of Moses was only meant to last until the time of Christ.**LUK 16:16; GAL 3:19, 24-25**.
 - E. The N.T. kingdom of God would be built with some pieces of the O.T. kingdom of God. **EPH 2:19-22 c/w ROM 11:15-18**.

- F. The reformation program began with John the Baptist (**LUK 16:16**) and was completed by 70 A.D. when Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews dispersed.
DAN 9:24-27 c/w LUK 21:20-22.
1. It is common for builders to utilize the good materials of existing construction as they rebuild. c/w **JER 18:1-6.**
 2. Once all the useful materials of existing construction have been saved and re-purposed, the useless refuse is just as commonly disposed of.
- G. The period between John the Baptist and Jerusalem's destruction saw two phases of God's kingdom on earth overlapping as the N.T. church phased out Israel as the covenant kingdom. This is the *shake-up* described in **HEB 12:25-28.**
1. The tribulation in Judea would be paralleled by the shaking of the powers of heaven. **MAT 24:29 c/w REV 12:5-10.**
 2. Christ's disciples would be able to witness that great tribulation in the land and *know that the kingdom of God was nigh at hand* (**LUK 21:29-32**). The destruction of Jerusalem and dispersal of the Jews signified that the transition of the kingdom from O.T. to N.T. was complete.
- X. Consider a seeming paradox in the divine timetable of the kingdom's reformation.
- A. The promised kingdom of God of which Daniel spoke was to come in the days of the Roman empire. **DAN 2:44.**
1. That Herod, an Edomite, was king in Israel indicated that the time was right for Messiah the Prince to appear.
DAN 9:25 c/w GEN 49:10; EZE 21:27 c/w LUK 1:32.
 2. Accordingly, it was announced, "...The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand..." (**MAR 1:14-15**).
 - a. The beginning of the ministry of Jesus Christ was, "...when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his son..." (**GAL 4:4**).
 - b. The beginning of Christ's ministry is His "coming" as Messiah the Prince. **ACT 13:24.**
 - c. This marks the beginning of Daniel's 70th week (of years), and in the midst of that seven-year period Messiah would be cut off. **DAN 9:26-27.**
 - d. Messiah's death was the means to His glory on the Judaic/Davidic throne *in heaven*. **PSA 89:35-37; LUK 24:26; HEB 1:8; 2:8-9.**
 3. Do not ever lose sight of these facts:
 - a. The promised kingdom was "at hand" beginning with John the Baptist's ministry. **MAT 3:1-2.**
 - b. at hand: a. Within easy reach; near; close by. b. near in time or closely approaching. c. at the immediate moment; at the start.
 - c. It was from that time and forward that people were entering that kingdom. **LUK 16:16.**
 - d. Yet, when prophesying of the destruction of the Jewish economy which that generation to which Jesus came would witness, He said, "...know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand" (**LUK 21:31-32**).
 - e. Mind that all this was taking place during a time when Israel the nation-state was still identified by Christ as God's kingdom. **MAT 21:43.**
- B. How could the nation-state still be God's kingdom when the gospel church was also God's kingdom at the same time?
- C. How could **DAN 9:26-27** see the end of the 70th week of years (490 years completed) to include the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. when the chronological order according to

the calendar should have meant that the 70th week ended in about 37 A.D.?

1. Jesus' anointing at His baptism was circa 30 A.D. **LUK 3:23.**
2. This marked the beginning of His Messianic coming and mission which was the beginning of the 70th week.
3. The 70 weeks was a determined limit *on Israel*. **DAN 9:24.**
4. Yet Israel continued past 37 A.D. and the terms of the New Covenant of Jesus Christ were still being presented to Israel well past that, even all the way through the Book of Acts until the *wrath of God to the uttermost* destroyed them.
ACT 28:20-31 c/w 1TH 2:15-16 c/w MAT 21:40-41.

D. Something which comes to an end *in one sense* by God's order may not terminate *in practice* until a later date.

1. Example: King Saul was dethroned *by decree* in **1SAM 15:26-28** but reigned *in practice* for the duration of his forty years. **ACT 13:21.**
 - a. While Saul was yet king, God anointed David as king. **1SAM 16:13.**
 - b. (**1SAM 16:14**) But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him.
 - c. Saul died a miserable suicidal death in a futile fight against God and God's replacement for him. **1SAM 18:12; 28:16; 31:4.**
 - d. The parallel between this and 1st C. Israel is stunning.
2. Example: Ancient Israel *came out* of Egypt both while Moses was living and after he died. How?
 - a. They physically, geographically departed from Egypt when they crossed the Red Sea following Moses. **EXO 13-14.**
 - b. Yet their *coming out* of Egypt was also said to occur forty years later after Moses' death when they crossed Jordan to enter Canaan. **ACT 7:36.**
 - c. At this latter *coming out*, the *reproach of Egypt* was finally rolled away from them. **JOS 5:9.**
 - (1) Israel's transition period was a platform for Egypt's reproaches. **EXO 32:12; NUM 14:13-16; DEU 32:27.**
 - (2) Egypt's reproaches against the O.T. church are alternately called the *reproaches of Christ*. **HEB 11:26.**
 - (3) It could therefore be said that Egypt was operating under the *spirit of antichrist*. c/w **1JO 4:3.**
 - d. The transition period of the N.T. kingdom of God/heaven/Christ was a platform for the reproaches of its corrupt, persecuting *alma mater*, Israel. **ACT 24:5; 28:22; 1PE 4:14.**
 - e. The reproach was powerfully rolled away in 70 A.D.
 - f. The reproach being taken away, the N.T. kingdom would then continue its *spiritual* work in the heathen world even as the O.T. kingdom once *carnally* engaged the heathen Canaanites.

XI. Consider the following similarities between the O.T. and N.T. forms of the kingdom of God.

- A. Kingdom of priests. **EXO 19:6 c/w 1PE 2:5-9; REV 1:5-6.**
- B. Priests washed to enter service in God's house.
EXO 40:12-15 c/w ACT 2:38-47; HEB 10:19-22.
- C. The wicked infiltrate and share in kingdom blessings but true heirs of the kingdom are the spiritually elect children of God.
ROM 9:6-16, 27-29; 11:1-5 c/w ACT 1:16-17; MAT 13:36-42.
- D. The house of God was the only place where sacrifices were to be accepted in the O.T. So,

believers are to be built together as God's house to make acceptable sacrifices.

LEV 17:1-9 c/w 1PE 2:5.

- E. The king anointed to reign. **1SAM 15:1 c/w ACT 4:27-28 & PSA 2:1-6.**
- F. The high priest anointed to office to make intercession. **LEV 8:12 c/w HEB 1:9; 5:5-6.**
- G. The house of God central to all things. **NUM 2:17 c/w MAT 16:18; EPH 1:22-23; 3:21.**
- H. God's communion with men in His house.
EXO 25:21-22 c/w LUK 22:29-30; 1CO 10:20-21.
- I. God's chosen dwelling place: His house. **2CH 7:1-2 c/w ACT 2:1-4; 1CO 3:16.**
- J. God's revelation stored and cared for by the priests in God's house.
DEU 17:18; 31:24-26; ISA 8:16 c/w 1TI 3:15; MAT 23:34; REV 12:17.
- K. Scribes given for writing and teaching. **EZR 7:11; NEH 8:4 c/w MAT 23:34.**
- L. God governing the world with an eye to His church.
PSA 105:14-15; EZE 9:6 c/w EPH 1:22-23; 1PE 4:17.
- M. Membership conditional in both.
 - 1. Israel required: one to be of the twelve tribes of Jacob or a proselyte by circumcision, male circumcision, married to an Israelite (as Ruth), conformity to the law of Moses (**EXO 12:48-49**).
 - 2. The church requires repentance from sin, faith in Jesus Christ, baptism, conformity to the law of Christ. **ACT 2:38; 20:21; MAT 28:19-20.**
- N. Appointed teachers/administrators of the law.
DEU 33:8-11 c/w ACT 20:17, 28; EPH 4:11-12.
- O. Appointed teachers/administrators materially supported by the general members.
1CO 9:13-14.
- P. Kingdom status imperiled by sin in both. **MAT 21:42-43 c/w REV 2:5.**

XII. Consider some differences/contrasts between the O.T. and N.T. forms of the kingdom of God, Mosaic v. Messianic.

- A. The O.T. kingdom had a natural, geographic inheritance: earthly Canaan. The N.T. kingdom has a spiritual inheritance through Christ wherever it is located.
EPH 1:3, 17-18 c/w EPH 5:5.
 - 1. The O.T. kingdom conquered others by carnal warfare.
 - 2. The N.T. kingdom overcomes others by spiritual warfare. **2CO 10:4-5.**
- B. The priesthood.
 - 1. Israel's priesthood was a small, distinct segment of the kingdom (**HEB 5:4**). The church's priesthood consists of all its members. **1PE 2:5.**
 - 2. Israel's priesthood was genealogical, the sons of Aaron (**NUM 3:10**). The church's priesthood only considers spiritual children of God in the inward man regardless of sex (**JOH 1:12-13; GAL 3:27-28**) and a spiritual lineage of conversion that traces from Christ. **1CO 4:15-17.**
- C. In the O.T. kingdom, priest and king were separate offices. In the N.T. kingdom, Jesus Christ is Priest and King (**HEB 6:20; 7:1**) Who makes church members priests and kings.
REV 1:6; 1PE 2:9.
 - 1. The O.T. high priest ministered on earth. Christ ministers in heaven. **HEB 8:1-4.**
 - 2. The O.T. high priest made annual atonement. Christ made one perfect sacrifice forever. **HEB 9:25-28.**
 - 3. The O.T. high priest was subject to loss of office (**1SAM 2:31**) and death (**HEB 7:23**). Christ is High Priest forever. **HEB 6:20.**
- D. The O.T. house of God was distinct from the church. The N.T. house of God is the church.
1TI 3:15.

- E. The O.T. temple was only in Jerusalem. The N.T. temple is wherever a true church exists. **MAL 1:11 c/w JOH 4:20-21.**
- F. The O.T. was the ministration of death in contrast to the N.T. which is the ministration of life. **2CO 3:6-7.**
1. In contrast to the O.T., service in the N.T. is life-oriented because we come unto a *living stone*. **1PE 2:4.**
 2. The O.T. temple was constructed of lifeless natural stones. The N.T. temple is constructed of *living spiritual stones*. **EPH 2:19-22; 1CO 3:16.**
 3. We approach God boldly through Jesus Christ by a *new and living way* devoid of dead animals, dying priests, threats of death, etc. **HEB 10:19-22.**
 4. We present our bodies as *living sacrifices*. **ROM 12:1.**
 5. We worship by *lively singing* rather than by *instruments that have no life*. **COL 3:16 c/w 1CO 14:7.**
 6. **(HEB 9:14)** How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?
 7. **(ROM 6:4)** Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.
- G. The O.T. kingdom had three mandatory feast appearances annually before the Lord (**EXO 23:14, 17**). The N.T. kingdom has a required feast (**1CO 5:8**) as often as established by its ministry. **1CO 11:26.**
- H. The O.T. kingdom was a church-state of combined religious, political, military and civil power. The N.T. kingdom is a spiritual power only. **JOH 18:36; LUK 22:24-30.**
- I. The O.T. kingdom imposed carnal punishment on religious, moral and personal offenders (**EXO 21:12; 31:15; LEV 20:11**) but the N.T. kingdom has power only to part company with the wicked. **1CO 5:1-3; 2TH 3:6.**
1. The O.T. permitted certain known sins and trespasses to be covered by fines without loss of membership in the kingdom. **LEV 5:15-16; DEU 22:16-19, 28-29.**
 2. The N.T. requires exclusion from the kingdom for such known sins against N.T. law. **1CO 5:11-13; 2TI 3:3-5.**
 3. The N.T. carries a weightier responsibility than the O.T. **HEB 10:28-29; 12:25.**
- J. In the O.T. kingdom, only the high priest communed with God in the Holiest place (**HEB 9:7**). In the N.T. kingdom, all regenerate church members have access to the Holiest by the blood of Christ. **HEB 10:19-21.**
- K. The O.T. kingdom was emphatically genealogical. The N.T. kingdom knows nothing of genealogical, racial, social or political distinctions. **COL 3:11.**
- L. The O.T. kingdom was replete with many burdensome ordinances, rituals and special days which are taken away in Christ. **COL 2:16; HEB 9:10.**
- M. The O.T. kingdom had rigid dietary law with many prohibitions (**LEV 11**). The N.T. kingdom only forbids eating blood (**ACT 15:29**), food offered to idols where an offense is caused (**1CO 8:7-10**), excess (**1CO 6:12-13; PHIL 4:5**) and eating without a clear conscience. **ROM 14:23.**
- N. The O.T. kingdom forbade uncircumcised Gentiles. The N.T. kingdom includes such as be of faith. **ACT 10:44-48; GAL 5:6.**
- O. The O.T. kingdom forbade eunuchs a place in God's house (**DEU 23:1**) but this prohibition is taken away in Christ's kingdom. **ISA 56:3-5 c/w ACT 8:38.**
- P. The O.T. kingdom tolerated easy divorce and remarriage (**DEU 24:1-2**). But the N.T. kingdom forbids such and calls it adultery. **MAT 19:3-9.**

- XIII. The time of reformation of the kingdom of God saw the unleashing of the powers of darkness in a concentrated effort to thwart God's interference with Satan's workings in this world.
- A. Remember that truth is Satan's great enemy which exposes him and upsets his applecart.
 - 1. He is the father of lies and has no truth. **JOH 8:44.**
 - 2. Satan holds men in bondage by lies but truth sets them free. **JOH 8:32.**
 - 3. A world of dark ignorance and superstition based upon Satan's lies was about to be changed, beginning at Jerusalem. **MAT 3:1-2; LUK 24:47.**
 - 4. Satan's goals of world domination had culminated in the Roman Empire and he knew that God intended to set up His own kingdom in opposition. **DAN 2:44.**
 - 5. Satan and his forces knew their Foe. **MAR 1:24.**
 - B. Remember that the true battle is fought in the spiritual realm against forces which seek to ruin believers and also control authorities of this world. **EPH 6:12.**
 - 1. Satan is very interested in high politics and his spiritual forces had fought previous battles with God's angels. **DAN 10:13, 20.**
 - a. Speculation: Could the 21 days during which God's angel fought with the "...prince of the kingdom of Persia..." (**DAN 10:13**) have been the period during which Cyrus (**DAN 10:1**) was being shown that he was God's anointed to set the Jews free? **EZR 1:1-2.**
 - b. He had been named as such in prophecy long before he was born. **ISA 44:28 – ISA 45:1.**
 - c. One could envision Cyrus being challenged, convicted and eventually convinced of this ancient prophecy. Its truth won out.
 - 2. After Christ's resurrection was a great spiritual war in heaven as Satan tried to stop the overthrow of an order he desired on earth. **REV 12:7-10.**
 - a. On the one hand was the nation which called itself God's kingdom (Israel) over which he had basically gained complete control as Jesus had prophesied. **MAT 12:45.**
 - b. On the other hand was the Gentile world which was being rapidly affected by the gospel. **ACT 17:6.**
 - c. The truth of Christ was devastating to both theaters of Satan: it separated its followers from the former so they were not destroyed with the rest, and cast down the superstitions of the Gentiles, suspending Satan's plans of world-wide deception and world government. The Messianic government via the churches of Jesus Christ (the kingdom of God) was well established, expanding and continued to stand against the kingdom of lies.
 - C. Among other things, the dawn of the new order (**LUK 16:16**) saw an outpouring of Satanic influence to oppose it.
 - 1. It was at this time that the Holy Spirit notes wide-spread possessions by devils or evil spirits which Jesus and the disciples would cast out (**MAT 4:24; 10:1**). It was as if hell itself erupted as it saw its Foe approaching.
 - 2. The ruling class of spiritual leaders in Israel was satanic. **JOH 8:38, 44.**
 - 3. Satan orchestrated the imprisonment of the man who announced the messianic King and kingdom. **MAT 4:12.**
 - 4. At the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, Satan made his only personal appearance to thwart God's plan. **MAT 4:1-11.**
 - D. There was also the eruption of occult practices in Israel which were typical of the darkened Gentile world. Remember that Israel would be taken over by evil spirits in the apostles' days. **MAT 12:43-45.**

1. Israel had a long history of being warned about and judged for dabbling in the occult arts. **DEU 18:10-11; 1SAM 28:7; 2CH 33:6; ISA 8:19-20.**
2. The prophets had warned about a surge of this problem commensurate with the ministries of Christ and the apostles. It would especially be manifested in Jewish leadership.
 - a. **ISA 8:18** has an eye on Christ. **HEB 2:13.**
 - b. **ISA 28:11-16** looks to Christ and apostolic times. **1CO 14:21; 1PE 2:6.**
 - c. **MIC 3:11-12** was fulfilled in Jerusalem's destruction by the Romans.
 - d. **MAL 3:1-5** pointedly speaks of the gospel era. **MAR 1:1-2.**
 - e. Jesus warned of false Christs with miraculous power in the apostles' days. **MAT 24:24.**
 - f. Paul warned about those who would oppose the truth as Jannes and Jambres did with counterfeit miracles. **2TI 3:8.**
3. The Pharisees and their spawn were involved in counterfeit miracles. **MAT 12:27.**
4. It was to be expected that the apostles would contend with occult arts among the uncircumcised, and they did. **ACT 16:16-17; 19:19-20.**
5. But that kind of opposition to the truth would come at least as much from the circumcision. **ACT 8:9-11; 13:6-8; 19:13-16.**
6. Paul's chief concern was about Jewish deceivers. **TIT 1:10.**
7. False Jewish teachers had bewitched the Galatians. **GAL 3:1.**
 - a. bewitch: 1. To affect (generally injuriously) by witchcraft or magic. Sometimes with complementary phrase defining the result. 2. *fig.* To influence in a way similar to witchcraft; to fascinate, charm, enchant. Formerly in a bad sense; but now generally said of pleasing influences.
 - b. OED cites **GAL 3:1** as an example of definition #2. However, do not quickly throw out the possibility that false Jewish brethren used occult arts to awe and sway the Galatians so effectively.
 - c. "Bewitched" in **ACT 8:9-11** is certainly not a figurative usage.
 - d. Paul's letter to the Galatians is the only one in which he expressly denounces witchcraft. **GAL 5:20.**
8. The Jews' degradation to occultism was consistent with their rebellion against God. Witchcraft and rebellion are both grasps for power in opposition to God (**1SAM 15:23**). Their light was going out while the Gentiles' was coming on.
9. Mind that Satan plans a similar "dump" of black magic to oppose the return of Christ and the heavenly kingdom. **REV 13:13-14 c/w 2TH 2:7-12.**