

THE KINGDOM OF GOD versus the Kingdom of Israel

The **Kingdom of God** is the major teaching of Jesus and Paul and the other apostles. And, as they define it in the gospels and the epistles, it is fundamentally opposed to the **WORLD**, and to the **KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD**, including the **KINGDOM OF ISRAEL**.

The **WORLD**ly church which was established in the 4th century deliberately obscured that basic distinction and worldly *Christianity* has perpetuated that confusion ever since, because faith in the nation is an essential part of their worldly pseudo *Christian* faith.

Immediately after He turned down Satan's offer to make him the ruler of *all the kingdoms of THIS WORLD* (Luke 4.5-8) Jesus began his ministry with the proclamation that *The Kingdom of God is at Hand* (Matthew 4.23, Mark 1.15, Luke 4.43, John 3.3-5) as John the Baptist had done before him. (Matthew 3.2) And he went on to explain and define the *Kingdom of God* in dozens of verses to the end of his life. In John 18.36 he explained to Pilate that *my kingdom is not of THIS WORLD* and so his followers **do not fight** to establish it. He was crucified under a sign which mocked his pretensions to be *The King of the Jews*. And it points up the essential mystery of the life and death of Jesus Christ--why he refused to become the King of Israel even while he proclaimed **the Kingdom of God**.

Jesus had two chances to be the king and he turned down both of them. When the people of Israel intended to make him the King of Israel, Jesus escaped, as related in John 6.15. Jesus was **not a patriot** ! He was a **draft refuser** in respect to becoming the Messiah the Jews wanted--a king who would lead them in a successful rebellion against the Roman Empire. That is why they quit him. And why, a few years later, they followed false messiahs who led them into a doomed rebellion against the Roman Empire. That ended in the death of a million Jews, the destruction of the Temple, and the permanent exile of the Jews. As Jesus warns in Matthew 24.

Jesus defined his kingdom and his kingship by what he refused to do, by what he did and by what he said. Matthew 21.5-8 describes him fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah 9.9 *thy King cometh unto thee . . . lowly, riding upon an ass*. It is a kind of triumphal procession into Jerusalem for the final act of the drama. But it is also the very negation of a proud military procession in which the **Son of David** should have entered Jerusalem, leading the army with which he would conquer Israel and throw off the yoke of the Roman Empire. Instead, you have these **undignified donkeys** and this ragged little impromptu procession. You have the unmistakable style of Jesus Christ. *Behold the man !* Behold the King of Peace ! That is why the Jews rejected his claim to be the *Messiah*.

The apostate Christians of the 4th century caused this **pacifist** Jesus to disappear behind the Imperial Jesus who became the partner of the Emperor Constantine--**by this sign you will conquer !** In one of his orations Eusebius speculates that the Court of Constantine is the Kingdom of God. Today's false Christians do the same thing via **patriotic christianity**--*GodBlessAmerica* ! What is it except the worship of the **beast** and his power ? [See *Tracking Satan* 666]

The Original Kingdom of God--*The Lord's tent*

When John the Baptist and Jesus announce that **THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND**, they put forth a claim which resonates all the way back to Moses setting up a special tent where the Lord will dwell right in the middle of the camp as they travel through the desert. Exodus 25.8 29.42-46. They take this quite literally. Deuteronomy 23.13-14 tells them to *cover that which cometh from thee; For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp*

In Judges 8.23, Gideon refuses to become the king: *I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you. The Lord shall rule over you.* And his refusal to become the king of Israel foreshadows the refusal of Jesus Christ to become the secular king of Israel in John 6.15 even while he persists in announcing that *the Kingdom of God is at hand.*

When the Lord finally agrees to let Israel have a human king, he agrees only under protest and says that it means *they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.* And in the very next verse, 1 Samuel 8.8, he equates their demand for a king with the apostasy whereby *they have forsaken me, and served other gods.* And in 8.11-18 he warns them that this king they have demanded will be a curse upon them, will take their sons and their daughters and their property, and that they will rue the day they asked for a king. 8.18 *And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you; and the Lord will not hear you in that day.* Hosea 8.4 says of the kings of Israel: *They have set up kings, but not by me. They have made princes and I knew it not.*

These passages show that the foundation of the Monarchy in Israel, represented not God's will but the wicked will of the Jewish people who thereby **REJECTED GOD**. This presentation is at odds with the belief that there is some easy compatibility between the Kingdom of God and the secular Kingdom of Israel.

The line which is drawn here between the kingship of God over the Jewish people and the rule of the kings of Israel points ahead to the line which Jesus Christ draws between the Kingdom of God which he proclaims and the Kingdom of Israel which he leaves to its folly and its terrible fate when he refuses to become the king of Israel.

The End of the Kingdom

Despite the reforms of King Josiah, he was killed in battle and the Kingdom of Judah came to an end in 586 B.C. The Lord abandoned it even though Josiah revived the observance of *The Law*. The northern kingdom of *Israel* proper had already been taken into permanent exile by the time that the anti patriot prophet Jeremiah prophesied the doom of *Judah*, the southern kingdom. By the time of Jesus, it had been more than 500 years since Israel had been an independent kingdom.

But they kept alive the hope of a restored kingdom. And this hope was mixed up with the great expectation that it will also somehow be **THE KINGDOM OF GOD** on earth. And it is this double hope which Jesus addresses in his teaching--**which he separates**. He proclaims the *Kingdom of God* while refusing to become the King of Israel. Jeremiah's prophecy of the **New Covenant** is adversarial to a Patriotic Faith centered upon the Nation of Israel and The Law and The Temple in which the endless animal sacrifices are essential to their relationship with The Lord. As Hebrews 10.4 explains: *it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sins.* [See *The New Covenant versus the Old Covenant* on the **RadicalChristianPress.org** web site, in the **Radical Christianity** section]

From the very beginning, Jesus had an adversarial relationship with the Kingdom of Israel. King Herod tried to kill him. (Matthew 2.3-18) And his son Herod beheaded John the Baptist who first announced that *the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Matthew 14.3-10 Jesus set out to reform Judaism in basic ways. He challenged their rule bound religion, which *strained out a gnat and swallowed a camel* (Matthew 23.24). He deliberately violated the Sabbath rules by telling the man

to pick up his bed and carry it. (John chapter 5). He taught them that it is **what comes out of your mouth**, not what goes into it, that makes you *unclean*. (Mark chapter 7) But mainly he defined **The Kingdom of God** to show that it would necessarily part company with **The Kingdom of Israel**. When you take away the Sabbath rules and the food rules and the animal sacrifices in the Temple and the faith in the nation of Israel, what is left of historical Judaism ?

In his parables he showed that the *New Covenant* was not restricted to the Nation of Israel and that *The Kingdom of God* was not reserved for the Jews-- *many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness.* Matthew 8.11-12 And Luke 16.16 *The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseseth into it.* And Luke 17.20-21 *And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: 21 Neither shall they say, Lo here ! or, lo there ! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you.*

In Luke 22.16 Jesus says *I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.* In Luke 24.42-43 he does eat, by way of showing that the **kingdom had arrived** as the result of his crucifixion and resurrection. In Luke 24.44, Jesus says that by his death and resurrection He has now fulfilled all things which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. That is, the fulfillment is done.

In the 24th chapter of Matthew, and other places in the gospel, Jesus warns them of what is coming to them because they have rejected the kingdom of God to pursue a secular kingdom. Instead they continued to pursue the dream and the illusion of a restored secular kingdom of Israel.

The rejection of King Jesus and his Kingdom was Act One. Act Two was the attempt to re-establish the Kingdom of Israel by a great uprising against the Romans in 66 A.D.. That was the kind of Kingdom they believed in. Act Three was the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple by the Romans, the death of a million Jews, and their dispersal to all nations.

Of course they were already dispersed. By the time of Jesus there were as many Jews in Alexandria Egypt as there were in Jerusalem. And the destruction of the Temple accelerated the development of the spiritual and individual form of Judaism which is not centered upon the Nation of Israel and which no longer relies upon the animal sacrifices of The Temple to stay right with God. And they are hardly to blame for not converting to that Military Christianity which began to persecute the Jews as well as the non-conforming Christians in the 4th century. The Jews will be converted if and when they ever encounter authentic Christianity. They won't learn it from the TV evangelists.

Terry Sullivan c 2024

this is on the **RadicalChristianPress.org** web site as pages 5 to 8 of *Turning the Other Cheek* in the **Contra Patriot Christianity** section

See also: *Render, Not Surrender, Unto Caesar* *Constantine's Miracle* *Heresy of the Christian State* and *Zionism versus Judaism*