

Chapter Two

REDISCOVERING THE KINGDOM CONCEPT

At the beginning of this book we talked about the power and importance of concepts when attempting to understand and communicate our ideas. It is most important to note that God the Creator chose the concept of a kingdom to communicate his purpose, will and plan for mankind and earth to us. The message of the Bible is primarily and obviously about a Kingdom. If you do not understand kingdoms, it is Impossible for you to understand the Bible and its message.

However, over the past 2,000 years the true concept of kingdom has been lost, especially since the advent of modern governments built on new concepts of governing, e.g., democracy, socialism, communism, and dictatorships.

For the most part, people in the Western world know very little about kingdom and the concept of royalty and monarchy.

This is further compounded by the idea that kingdoms are designed to elevate one family above all families and subjugate and oppress citizens. While it is true that many kingdoms have dark histories of atrocities and oppression, prospering at the expense of the dignity and value of their citizens, the original concept of kingdom as introduced by God himself, stands alone as the perfect prototype of government built on righteous judgment. All the kingdoms of the earth were mere attempts to imitate this perfect Kingdom. Today our modern democracies are attempts to achieve the goals of the perfect kingdom, without the necessary raw material—the Holy Spirit.

Added to this confusion, and even ignorance, concerning kingdom, religion has further diverted our understanding by converting the message of the Kingdom of God into a moral belief system. The result is that religion has become an end in itself, distinguishing itself from the Kingdom concept with pride. In fact, many religions take pride in the separation of religion and state and see the two as opposing entities with no common relationship. The dilemma is that the Kingdom is a state government with all the characteristics of a state.

Jesus came to earth to restore what Adam lost, and he brought a kingdom message. Jesus came to reestablish the government of God on earth and to reinstate his earthly kings to their rightful place of dominion. Adam lost a kingdom, not a religion, and therefore the redemptive work of the Creator would be the reestablishment of his Kingdom on earth. Let's take a look at what a Kingdom entails, in order to better understand the message of Jesus Christ and the Bible.

WHAT IS A KINGDOM?

The kingdom concept was born in the heart of man, placed there by his Creator as the purpose for which he was created. Despite the fact that there were many types of kingdoms throughout history, there are certain characteristics common to all kingdoms. The Kingdom of God, according to Jesus, also possesses these components. Here are some you will need to know in order to understand the concepts of Scripture. All kingdoms have:

- A King and Lord - a sovereign;
- A Territory - a domain;
- A Constitution - a royal covenant;
- A Citizenry - community of subjects;
- Law - acceptable principles;
- Privileges - rights and benefits;
- A Code of Ethics - acceptable lifestyle and conduct.,
- An Army - security; and,
- A Commonwealth - economic security; and,
- A Social Culture - protocol and procedures.

The King is the embodiment of the kingdom, representing its glory and nature. Authority flows from the king and the word of the king is supreme.

The Territory is the domain over which the king exercises total authority. The territory and its resources and people are all personal property of the king. The king by right owns all and, therefore, is considered lord over all. The word *Lord* denotes ownership by right. *Lord* is only given to one who is sovereign owner. This is why the Scriptures declare,

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." (Ps. 24: 1 KJV).

The Constitution is the covenant of a king with his citizenry and expresses the mind and will of the king for his citizens and the kingdom. It constitutes the intent of the sovereign for his people as well as containing the benefits and privileges of the kingdom. The constitution is the documented words of the king. The Bible contains the constitution of the Kingdom of God which details his will and mind for his citizens.

The Citizenry is the people that live under the rule of the king. Citizenship in a kingdom is not a right, but a privilege, and is a result of the king's choice. The benefits and privileges of a kingdom are only accessible to citizens and, therefore, the favor of the king is always a privilege. Once one becomes a citizen of the kingdom, all the rights of citizenship are at the citizen's pleasure. The king is obligated to care for and protect all of his citizens, and their welfare is a reflection on the king himself. The number one goal of a citizen in a kingdom is to submit to the king, seeking only to remain in right standing with him. This is called righteousness. This is why Jesus said the priority of all men is to seek his kingdom.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well (Matt. 6:33).

The Law constitutes the standards and principles established by the king himself, by which his kingdom will function and be administered. The laws of a kingdom are to be obeyed by all, including foreigners residing in it. The laws of a kingdom are the way by which one is guaranteed access to the benefits of the king and the kingdom. Violations of kingdom law places one at odds with the king and thus interrupts the favorable position one enjoys with the king. The laws in a kingdom cannot be changed by the

citizens, nor are they subject to a citizen referendum or debate. Simply put, the word of the king is law in his kingdom. Rebellion against the law is rebellion against the king. King David understood this principle of the royal word when he stated,

*I will bow down toward Your holy temple and will praise your name
For your love and Your faithfulness, for You have exalted above all
things your name and Your word (Ps. 138:2-3).*

The Privileges are the benefits the king lavishes on his faithful citizens. This aspect of kingdom is very different from other forms of government. In a kingdom, citizenship is always desired by the people because, once you are in the kingdom, the king is personally responsible for you and all your needs. In addition, because the king owns everything within his kingdom, he can give to any citizen any or all of his wealth as he desires.

A Code of Ethics is the acceptable conduct of the citizens in the kingdom and their representation of the kingdom. This code includes moral standards, social relationships, personal conduct, attitude, attire and manner of life.

The Army is the kingdom's system of securing its territory and protecting its citizens. It is important to understand that in a kingdom the citizens do not fight in the army, but enjoy the protection of the army. This is why, in the Kingdom of God, the angels are called the host of heaven. This word *host* means army and identifies the angels as the so called military component of the Kingdom of heaven. This kingdom concept presents a challenge to our religious thinking of the Church as an army. A careful study of the biblical constitution of the word will show that the Church, as Jesus established it, is not identified as an army but rather a citizenship, a family of sons and a nation.

*He unleashed against them his hot anger, his wrath, indignation
and hostility—a band of destroying angels (Ps. 78:49-50).*

*Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding,
who obey his word. Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts,
you his servants who do his will (Ps. 103:20-21).*

*So it will be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send out his
angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes
sin and all who do evil. They will throw them into the fiery furnace,
where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matt. 13:40b-42).*

A Commonwealth is the economic system of a kingdom which guarantees each citizen equal access to financial security. In a kingdom, the term *commonwealth* is used because the king's desire is that all his citizens share and benefit from the wealth of the kingdom. The kingdom's glory is in the happiness and health of its citizens. Consider carefully the word of the King of the Kingdom of God, Jesus Christ,

*Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry
about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you*

will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes
(Luke 12:22-24).

*But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.
Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give
you the kingdom* (Luke 12:31-32).

The Social Culture is the environment created by the life and manners of the king and his citizens. This is the cultural aspect that separates and distinguishes the kingdom from all others around it. It is the culture that expresses the nature of the king, through the lifestyle of his citizens. This distinction in Kingdom culture is evidenced in the words of the Lord Jesus, when he repeatedly said in the Book of Matthew, "*you have heard it said ... but I tell you,*" (Matt. 5:21-22), and again, "*But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;*" (Matt. 20:26). Kingdom social culture is supposed to be evident in our daily activities and encounters.

KINGDOM COMPONENTS

All kingdoms are comprised of a number of components necessary for them to function effectively. All kingdoms, including the Kingdom of God, have:

- A Health program - healing;
- An Education program - Teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit;
- A Taxation system - Tithing;
- A central Communication system - Gifts of the Spirit;
- A Diplomatic Corps - Ambassadors of Christ;
- A System of Administration - the Ministration of the Spirit through mankind called the Church; and,
- An Economy - a system of Giving and Receiving (seed time and harvest time).

A careful study of the biblical message and the presentation of the message of the Kingdom of heaven by Jesus will illustrate the presence of all these components and characteristics of life in the Kingdom of God.

However, the most outstanding element distinguishing the Kingdom of God from every other kingdom is the concept that *all* of its citizens are relatives of the King, and are kings themselves. This was the message brought to earth by the Lord Jesus Christ.

A CONTRAST OF KINGDOMS

The buses lined the streets of the small town, bringing tourists from far and near to visit and photograph the little wooden house. Many traveled over seas to see this antique structure that had no architectural relationship to the modern concrete jungle that surrounded it. It looked like a slice of history served on the streets of the 21st century. It had now become the source of new tourist dollars for the staggering local economy and provided much needed jobs for the citizens of this small town.

However, it wasn't that long ago that this same old house was falling apart, dilapidated and an eyesore. Its walls held many memories and stories of the great past of the city. Some of the citizens demanded that it be taken down because it was affecting the real estate value of their properties. However, an old man who looked and acted almost as

old as the little house began a petition to save the quaint little structure. Finally, he gained enough support to qualify the structure for the city conservation and preservation and antiquities act, and so began the long journey of restoration of this masterpiece of historical architecture.

Being a visitor to the city, I wanted to meet the old man and requested my driver take me to his house so I might hear the full story of the salvation of the condemned house.

A LESSON IN RESTORATION

As the car pulled up to the fence surrounding the old wooden house with the paint peeling, three dogs ran out to meet us with unexpectedly friendly barks. The old man sitting in his creaky rocking chair beckoned to us as if he had been waiting for us for years. I stepped onto the porch and sat on an old crate he provided for us to rest. After I introduced myself, he asked what was our interest in the house. I asked him to tell me how he saved that house from impending destruction. With a twinkle in his eyes, he gathered his thoughts and proceeded to take me on a mental Journey that held my attention like a child hearing a tale for the first time.

He spoke fondly of the history of this little old house and of his childhood experiences with its life. When I asked him about the restoration process, he told me a story I will never forget. He said that the house was a *genuine* restoration. "What do you mean by genuine restoration?" I asked. "Well," he replied, "You see, some so—called restorations are not genuine because they substitute materials for the original." Then gesturing toward the city square, he said, "But that project is genuine restoration because the architects went back to the archives and located the original drawings, then used the exact same materials for every part of the restoration reconstruction. In fact, the little house looks just like it did the day it was built."

"So true restoration requires the original plans and materials to be complete and genuine," I asked. "Absolutely! This is why the value of the restored house is worth more than the towering skyscrapers surrounding it," answered the old man. I left that porch that day with a greater appreciation for the complicated process called restoration and also understood more fully the great restoration program the Creator has been executing on this earth.

The divine strategy devised by the all-wise Creator follows the same principle as that of the old man's story. The loss of heaven's Kingdom on earth through Adam's disobedient act and, subsequently, the loss of Its earthly envoy, the Holy Spirit, demanded restoration. This required a heavenly program for earth preservation. This program became known as the redemptive work of God. The goal of the program is the recovery and reestablishment of the Kingdom of heaven on earth and the reinstatement of mankind as its legal kingly representative.

The divine strategy was the return of the original Adam to earth to reconstruct the old Adam that had failed. The means would be the coming of the Messiah King to redeem, restore and reconnect man back to heaven's government once again. This promise of a royal seed in Genesis 3:15 established the coming of God in the flesh as a legal redeemer with all the rights to enter earth's realm to achieve this goal.

This declaration was known as "the promise" and activated the long historical expectation of a Messiah king destined to redeem all men and restore them back to their kingly position.

This process included the calling and appointment of a specific line through which this great king would come. Divine prerogative then chose an obedient man named Abraham (Genesis 12:1-4) to whom the promise was given of the coming of the Kingdom seed to redeem and restore, not just his nation, but all the nations of the world of mankind.

I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:2-3).

MISUNDERSTANDING THE MESSAGE AND THE METHOD

The greatest danger in life is the misconstruing of a concept. A careful study of the promise will show that the promise was made "to" the nations "through" Abraham. This promise was the material for the introduction of prophets to the world. All the prophets of the Old Testament were raised up primarily to continually proclaim this promise of the coming messianic king, who would restore the Kingdom our father, Adam, lost.

Abraham had a son of promise as promised, Isaac, who had two Sons named Jacob and Esau. Jacob was chosen by God to be the line for the seed of the messiah king and his name was changed by God himself to Israel, which means "prince with God." Perhaps this was to confirm the royal line of descendants. Israel had 12 sons who became known as the 12 tribes or clans of Israel and collectively as the Israelites.

The Hebrews or Israelites were reminded of the promise from generation to generation, that the Messiah king would come and through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. However, they as a people misunderstood the promise and made themselves the object of the promise rather than the conduit. God had promised Abraham that the Messiah would come through his seed to redeem the world, but the Israelites used the choice of their line as a distinguishing factor to separate themselves from the very people they were to serve.

They developed a self-centered religion that condemned the world to which they were appointed to deliver the Redeemer, rather than God's mention of a Kingdom of heaven on earth. Israel became the masters of misinformation. This error has left scars throughout history and continues to feed the remnant of Judaism today. This is where the great religion of Judaism was born, causing the reactionary development of many other religions of today. Over the past 3,000 years, the message of the Kingdom was gradually buried in the graveyard of religion.

THE PROMISE OF KINGDOM REDISCOVERY

The Old Testament is earth's file of heaven's record of the promise of the coming of the King and the Kingdom. All the prophecies were about his arrival and what he

would bring; the laws given to Moses foreshadowed the laws and principles of the Kingdom. There are thousands of references to this specific announcement and a few are worth reviewing:

Moses predicted it:

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him (Deut. 18:15).

David spoke of the Kingdom:

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures through all generations (Ps. 145:13).

Isaiah saw the coming of the King and the Kingdom in detail:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this (Isa.9:6-7).

Daniel saw the King and the Kingdom in graphic detail:

In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. his dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed (Dan. 7:13-14).

So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: "The four great beasts are four kingdoms that will rise from the earth. But the saints of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever-yes, for ever and ever" (Dan. 7:16b-18).

As I watched, this horn was waging war against the saints and defeating them, until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom (Dan. 7:21-22).

But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. his kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him. This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my

face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself (Dan.7:26-28).

It is incredible to read these few scriptures and see, without a doubt, that the message of the Bible is about the coming of a kingdom, not a religion. However, the announcement of the Old Testament was about the coming of a prophet who would prepare the way and introduce the Messiah-King to the world personally. This was referring to John the Baptist. Let's read the prophecy from Malachi:

Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel. See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse (Mal. 4:4-6).

So we see that the restoration plan of God was in motion from its earliest announcement to the adversary in Genesis, chapter 3. The prophecy stated that he would come and prepare the people for the entrance of the King and the Kingdom.

THE LONG WAIT—4,000 YEARS

According to biblical chronology, despite the possibility that the earth may have been in existence much longer, the creative act of God's making man is determined to be at least six thousand years ago. If we were to use this measure to calculate the length of God's redemptive drama for mankind then the promise of the coming Messiah King would have occurred 4,000 years before the birth of John the Baptist. This means God waited for 4,000 years before he sent his Messiah King to earth. The question is why?

WAITING FOR A KINGDOM MODEL

God is a great communicator. He knew that he could not fully reveal the good news of his Kingdom until an environment existed in which people could understand the message. Only when the time was right could Christ come. Jesus could not come until a Kingdom model existed as a visual illustration to help people understand his teachings on the Kingdom. Only in the "fullness of time" could the Kingdom be revealed.

The same chapter of Genesis that describes the fall of man also announces God's promised solution, but many millennia would pass before its fulfillment. Because of the serpent's (Satan's) role in tempting the first human couple to sin, God pronounced a curse on him, which also foretold his future doom: "So the Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel'" (Gen. 3:14-15). God promised that one of Eve's offspring would crush the serpent's head, inflicting a fatal wound. That "seed" would be Jesus Christ.

When Jesus appeared preaching the Kingdom of heaven, he was the culmination of thousands of years of preparation in God's plan. What was God waiting for?

Throughout history God was setting the stage and preparing an environment for his Son's appearance.

PREPARING FOR THE KING

Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God and by this action they cut off themselves (as well as all future generations of human beings) from his Kingdom. The first significant biblical figure after Adam and Eve was Noah, a righteous man who believed in and followed God. He and his family survived the great flood by riding it out in an ark. Afterwards, however, Noah planted a vineyard and got drunk. Eventually his sons went their own ways and forgot God. Their descendants fell into idol worship and other kinds of evil. The time was not yet right for the Kingdom.

Ten generations after Noah, God spoke to Abram, a descendant of Noah's son Shem. God revealed himself to Abraham and made a covenant with him that would make of him a great nation. From Abraham came Isaac, the son born to him in his old age. Still, God had no model of the Kingdom.

Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob. God appeared to Jacob and said, "I will make of you a great nation. Your name will now be Israel." Israel had 12 sons, who were the fathers of the 12 tribes of the nation of Israel. God was working toward his model. Through Moses he delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, brought them into the desert, and told them, "You will be My people and I will be your God. I will lead you into the land I promised your forefathers." In other words, he was saying, "I will be your King and you will be My Kingdom":

After awhile, however, the people of Israel got tired of a God they could not see and longed for a king they could see. God never desired for them to have an earthly king. This was not the appropriate model that he was seeking. Nevertheless, God gave in to their wishes and instructed the prophet Samuel to anoint Saul as king of Israel. Because the nation of Israel rejected God in favor of an earthly king, the time still was not right for the Kingdom of heaven to be revealed.

A LONG SUCCESSION OF KINGS

After a promising start, Saul disobeyed God to the point at which God rejected him as king. God then chose David, a man after his own heart, to be king in Saul's place. David was a good king and a mighty warrior who loved God. He was also a poet and worshiper whose songs comprise the bulk of the longest book in the Bible: the Psalms. David was the first to informally combine the functions of priest and king. He worshiped and wrote worship songs, but he also administered government wisely and ably. A model of God's Kingdom was beginning to emerge.

Then David disappointed God by committing adultery with Bathsheba and compounding his sin by trying to cover it up. He arranged to have her husband Uriah killed. From then until the end of his life, trouble dogged David's steps. After the death of Solomon, David's wise and capable son and successor, the kingdom they had built split in two as ten tribes rebelled against the house of David. The time still was not right for the Kingdom of heaven to be revealed.

Following a long succession of kings, most of whom rejected God and served idols, first the northern kingdom of Israel and then the Southern kingdom of Judah fell to outside conquerors. The northern kingdom was assimilated into the Assyrian empire and ceased to exist. The kingdom of Judah was conquered by the Babylonians, and the brightest and best of her people were carried into exile for 70 years.

Daniel, one of the exiles and an official in the Babylonian government, received a power vision from God that showed him that the Kingdom was not dead and forgotten. God was still working toward his model, preparing for the "fullness of time" when his Son would come and reveal the Kingdom. Daniel spoke of a "son of man" who would do great things. Several hundred years later, Jesus would refer to himself as the Son of man, his favorite self-designation.

BABYLONIANS, GREEKS, AND ROMANS

The Babylonians fell to the Persians, who allowed the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild their Temple and the city of Jerusalem. The Persians fell to the Greeks, whose great tradition of philosophy influenced the entire Mediterranean world. In time, the Greek Empire fell to the Romans, with their genius for military campaigns, law, and government administration. At last, the time for which God had been preparing drew near. The Roman Empire was the first in history with a structure and administration that resembled the Kingdom of God. Finally, God had his model.

Unlike the empires that preceded it, when Rome invaded and conquered a country, it set up its own administration with its own governor appointed by the emperor, but left the indigenous people in the land. Rome governed its conquered territory through appointed representatives who ruled with the authority of the emperor himself. The job of a Roman governor was to govern his province in such a way as to make it a reflection of Rome.

Rome became the greatest empire in history because it had a system of government that worked better than any that had gone before. It was a simple system, really: take over territory, leave the people in the land, but appoint a governor and establish an administration that will turn them into Romans.

Everything was now set. The Roman Empire provided the perfect model for the message of the Kingdom of God because it contained the concepts of the kingdom that would make the message of Jesus easily understood. God's Kingdom model was in place. The time had come for God to send his Son. The time had come for the Kingdom of heaven to be revealed.

JUST AT THE RIGHT TIME

The Bible says that when the fullness of time came, God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world (Gal. 4:4). This means that God waited to send Jesus until the situation was ripe. Jesus came at just the right moment and place in history. What made this particular time 2,000 years ago right? Among other things, the time was right because there was a great earthly kingdom in place that could provide tangible, visible illustrations for Jesus' teachings about the Kingdom. The Roman Empire served as a model.

Under Caesar, the Roman Empire was a kingdom, not a democracy. Caesar was a king, not a president. During Jesus' day Rome ruled most of the known world. Its government, laws, institutions, and culture were everywhere. Every word that Jesus spoke about the Kingdom of God had a physical equivalent in Rome, making his message easier to understand for the people who listened to him.

For example, the Roman senate was called the *ecclesia*, a Greek word that means "assembly," or "called-out ones." Greek and Latin were both widely spoken throughout the Empire. Jesus spoke Aramaic, the common language of the Jews of Palestine, but the Gospels were originally written in Greek. The Gospel writers use the word *ecclesia* in passages where Jesus talks about building his "Church." Just as Caesar had an assembly of called-out ones—the Senate—so also did Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God and King of kings have his assembly of called-out ones—His Church.

IMAGE OF A KING

Caesar issued coins stamped with his image and inscription. People understood that whatever bore Caesar's image belonged to Caesar and he had every right to claim it. Likewise, they could understand that whatever bore God's image and stamp of ownership belonged to God and was his for the claiming. When we come to Jesus and give him our lives, the first thing he does is change our name. He gives us his name and calls us his sons and daughters. John tells us that to those who believe in his name He gives the right to become children of God (John 1:12). As children of God, we are joined together with Christ and seated on his throne in heaven next to our Father.

The Bible says that as believers we are citizens of heaven. That remains true no matter where we go. Whenever I travel internationally, I carry my passport with me, which identifies me as a Bahamian citizen to every foreign official who needs to see it. I do not have to be *In* the Bahamas to be a Bahamian; I am still a Bahamian citizen whether I am in the United States, Europe, or South America. Likewise, we do not have to be *in* heaven to be citizens there. Right now, we live on earth, but are citizens and ambassadors of the heavenly Kingdom, which is our true home.

YOU ARE A KING!

When Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate mere hours before his crucifixion, the Roman governor was surprised at his silence in the face of the accusations that had been brought against him. At one point Pilate asked:

Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

(John 19:10-11).

As the Roman governor of Judea, Pilate represented the full power and authority of the Emperor himself. The full force of the mightiest empire in history backed Pilate's words, yet Jesus said that all that power had come from above, meaning, from his Father.

This was Kingdom talk, and Jesus was saying that his Kingdom was greater than Rome's because it was from his Kingdom that Rome received its power. At another point, Pilate questioned Jesus about his Kingdom:

Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. (John 18:33-38).

Jesus answered Pilate plainly, acknowledging that he was both a King and that his Kingdom was "from another place," that is, not from the earth. his Kingdom is a kingdom of truth, for he came "to testify to the truth." All who desire the truth listen to him. Therefore, Christ's Kingdom of truth is made up of citizens who are not only truth seekers but also truth followers. This alone makes his Kingdom unique, completely different from the kingdoms of the world.

As believers, we live on earth but our citizenship is in the Kingdom of heaven, and all the resources, authority, and power of that Kingdom are available to us as we seek to live as faithful and responsible ambassadors of our King. When someone asks us, "Where are you from?" we should give careful thought to our answer. The more we learn to think like Kingdom citizens, the more we will act like Kingdom citizens. The more we act like Kingdom citizens, the more we will proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom to a lost world, because that is our primary dominion mandate. It is important that we learn to live distinct Kingdom lives so that others can tell the difference between the kingdoms of this world and the Kingdom of God.

Every human being who has ever lived, has faced the same tension. being designed for one kingdom, yet forced to live in another. Most people are never able to clearly define the problem. For them, life Always seems somewhat out of kilter, purposeless, and full of misery, as If something just doesn't quite fit. They are generally dissatisfied and discontented with life, but don't really know why.

Nothing works accurately when it is removed from the environment for which it was designed. A fish out of water will quickly suffocate; a human being under water without special breathing apparatus will soon drown.

GOD CREATED A WORLD JUST FOR YOU

One of the fundamental principles of creation is that whenever God creates something he designs it according to its purpose and intended environment. In other words, when God created birds to fly, he gave them wings and the desire to fly. When God created fish to swim, he put in them the ability to swim and gave them gills so they could breathe in water. When God created mankind to have dominion over the earth, he imparted to us the ability to govern, rule, lead, and manage the earth, its creatures, and resources. We are designed to rule, not to be ruled. We are designed to govern, not to be governed. We are designed to manage, not to be managed. We are designed to lead, not to follow.

Whenever anyone tries to tell us what to do, even someone in a legitimate position of authority, there arises in us a spirit or attitude of resistance. It is our nature to resist being ruled or controlled by others. This is due in part to our sinful nature, which we inherited from Adam and Eve, and which the Bible says is always in rebellion against God, who is the ultimate and absolute authority. Adam and Eve sinned when, out of pride, they sought to be equal with God, their Creator, and free from his authority over them.

Our resistance to others ruling over us is also due to the spirit of leadership that God placed in us when he created us. God's purpose was for us to rule over the created order as vice-regents under his authority. He designed us for that purpose and put in us the appropriate spirit and innate ability to fulfill our destiny. Sin distorted and exaggerated that spirit, pushing it beyond the bounds that God intended. Our natural tendency is to resist *all* authority, including God's.

One reason so many of us experience frustration in life is because our environment has changed. We were designed to rule our lives and environment but instead we live in a world where we are ruled by our own pride, lust, passion, greed, and selfishness. We are dominated by the adversary, Satan, the author of sin and the instigator of humanity's downfall. God designed us for mastery, yet that is not the reality we experience in our daily living. We are frustrated because we are not fulfilling our purpose. We do not function properly because we are not living in the environment for which we were designed.

The key to fulfilled and purposeful living is discovering how to regain our place of dominion, to return to our position of leadership in the earthly domain as God originally intended. To do this, we must understand the contrasts between the two kingdoms that envelop lives as well as how we are to integrate ourselves properly into these two different worlds.

THE SEEDS OF LEADERSHIP

When God created us, he gave us everything we needed to fulfill his original plan and purpose. Because God designed us to lead, the seeds of leadership lie within us, dormant until they are ready to be activated by the power of God. For this reason, leadership is not something we should have to *study* as much as something that is already inside us. It is a matter of discovering and nurturing those powers of leadership within us.

Within the earthly realm, God has given us great freedom. Ultimately, the kind of leaders we become and the degree of dominion we exercise depends upon us. God will never violate our freedom or override the dominion spirit He placed within us. Although,

I must say that he might make life awfully unbearable for us until we turn toward him. The Holy Spirit will never force our hand. But as we allow him, the Holy Spirit will convict us, guide us, and lead us, but he will never *drive* us.

Some of you may question this concept of the leadership potential within you. Maybe you consider yourself to be a follower and not a leader. Maybe you think you don't have the skills, qualities, ability, or experience to be a leader. Perhaps you have accepted the negative things others have said about you. In truth, it does not matter what other people say or think, or even what we think of ourselves. What matters is how God sees us, and he sees us as leaders and rulers in the earthly domain. He created us for this purpose and designed us with the necessary abilities to fulfill our destiny.

As Creator, God knows what is inside each one of us because he put It there. Whenever God speaks to you, he addresses you based on what he knows about you, not on what other people think they know.

CALLED TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE

The Bible is full of stories of people who were called out of ordinary circumstances and challenged by God to do the impossible. When childless Abraham and Sarah were in their old age, far beyond the normal years for childbearing, God told them, "You will have a son, and he will grow into a great nation."

The Lord appeared to Gideon, the youngest of his family, which was of the least of the tribes of Israel, and he addressed him as "mighty warrior" (Judg. 6:12) and used him to deliver his people from the marauding Midianites.

In the eyes of his family, David may have been only a runt, useful for nothing but herding sheep. Nevertheless, God said, "You are a king," and sent Samuel to anoint him as such.

Seeing Joseph while he was a slave in Egypt, God said, "You are a ruler," and elevated him to the position of prime minister under Pharaoh.

When God speaks to us, he always speaks to the *real* person, not the person others see or even how we see ourselves. He looks beyond our external circumstances and personal characteristics as he addresses the leader inside us. No matter who we are, where we are, or what we do, God wants to deploy us into leadership. Wherever we work, whatever our career, we should think of our employment not as just a job but as an opportunity God has given us to release our leadership abilities. We should not complain about our wages or salary because we are already worth more than anyone could ever pay us. Work is not about simply making money in order to live. Work is also about being trained to assume our rightful place of leadership in the world.

As believers, we are all children of the King. The first step in successfully navigating between two kingdoms is learning how to think and act like the King's children. In spiritual reality we are all princes and princesses, but practically speaking most of us are not there yet because negative thinking has stunted our mental processes. Because we never learned to think like royalty, we still act like the prodigal son, seeking only the servant's share.

God wants us to open our eyes to see the wonders of who we truly are—His children—and reach out to claim all that is ours by right of sonship. It all comes down to

a decision that each of us alone must make: whether we will live as sons and daughters in the Kingdom of God, or as subjects in the kingdom of the world.

KINGDOMS IN CONFLICT

God reigns as King and absolute Sovereign over all things in both the spiritual and physical realms. After he created the earth with all its varied plant and animal life, he created mankind to rule over it. By his design we are rulers over the earthly domain. God is King of the universe, and we are his ruling representatives in the physical realm. The earth is our designated territory. As God's vice regents in this world, we *are the Kingdom of God on earth*. The Kingdom of God, therefore, is not the earth itself, but the ones chosen to function as his rulers in the earthly domain. This planet is not the Kingdom of God. God's Kingdom is *us* carrying out his dominion on this planet. God's Kingdom is manifest in his people rather than in a particular place.

Psalm 115:16 says, "*The highest heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth he has given to man.*" Every king or ruler must have territory to rule. Heaven is God's territory; the earth is ours. We were born to dominate earth, not heaven. That is why heaven is always a temporary excursion for the human spirit: It is not our territory.

Jesus spoke constantly about the Kingdom. Sometimes he referred to the "Kingdom of God," and other times to the "Kingdom of heaven." One deals with the person while the other deals with the place. Essentially, both phrases are the same, with one distinction. Whenever Jesus mentions the "Kingdom of God," he is referring to the actual rule of God in the spiritual realm. When he says, the "Kingdom of heaven," he is talking about its "headquarters" and the heavenly invasion upon the earth, or the transfer of power from the spiritual realm to the physical.

The prayer of the Lord illustrates this truth when he prays that the will of God be done in the earth regions as it is done in heaven's realm. The first speaks to God's actual rulership, while the second speaks of the source of that invading powerful Kingdom and its impact on the regions of the earth. As his representatives we are called to enforce the rule of heaven in the affairs of man.

The Kingdom of God on earth, therefore, is God's authority within the heart and spirit of man, and the Kingdom of heaven is when that authority impacts the human earthly environment through his designated representatives.

In other words, we who are the "Kingdom of God" on earth can, through the Holy Spirit, take our King with us everywhere we go and impact our environment by helping bring the "Kingdom of heaven to that place. This is what Jesus meant when he said, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (Matt. 4:17). He had arrived, bringing the Kingdom with him and in him. With his Spirit in us, we, too, carry his Kingdom with us wherever we go.

A KINGDOM OF IGNORANCE

God's orderly design was disrupted by the fall of man. By their disobedience, Adam and Eve abdicated their throne of earthly dominion, yielding it to Satan, the architect and instigator of their fall. This ushered in a counterfeit kingdom that the Bible calls the "kingdom of darkness," which is in constant conflict with the Kingdom of God.

When man chose to will something other than the will of God, he created a great disturbance in the force and initiated a time of great darkness.

Frequently throughout the Bible, the word *darkness* is used as a symbol of ignorance, while the word *light* represents knowledge. The *kingdom of darkness*, then, "is a domain where the king rules by ignorance- not *in* ignorance, but *by* ignorance." Satan rules his kingdom of darkness by keeping his "subjects" in ignorance of the true nature of their environment and of the existence of God's Kingdom. He fills their heads With lies and deception. Satan Controls his subjects by keeping them "in the dark" regarding spiritual truth. He blinds their minds lest they understand the glorious good news of Jesus and the Kingdom of heaven.

The apostle Paul stated it this way: "*The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the Image of God*" (2 Cor. 4:4).

In contrast to the darkness of ignorance, the light symbolizes knowledge. The Lord. Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the *beginning* of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline" [emphasis mine]. In this verse, the word *fools* refers to "people who are morally deficient:" God's Kingdom of light brings the knowledge of grace, forgiveness, and salvation in Christ. In his letter to the believers in the city of Colosse, Paul wrote of God as " ... *the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins*" (Col 1:12-14).

Darkness and light-ignorance and knowledge-are opposites that exist In continual conflict with each other. We either walk in the darkness of ignorance or in the light of knowledge. The two cannot coexist.

CREATING A LIGHT IN THE DARK PLACES

I have made it clear that there are two kingdoms with which we must deal on a daily basis. One is a counterfeit kingdom of darkness controlled by a false prince who rules by the power of deception and enforced ignorance. The other is the true and legitimate Kingdom ruled by the King of kings and Lord of lords, who rules by the power of light, knowledge, and truth.

God's plan is to restore his original design to rule the visible earthly realm from the invisible heavenly realm. This plan is accomplished through human beings who properly exercise their dominion over the earth. In order for us to fulfill our destiny we must overthrow Satan from the throne of the earthly domain he seized illegitimately. From a spiritual standpoint, this has already happened through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ: "*The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work*" (1 John 3:8b).

Jesus' death on the cross broke sin's power forever; his resurrection from the grave conquered death for all time: "*Where, O death, is your victory? Where O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Cor. 15:55-57).

In a practical sense from the beachhead established at Calvary, we must move forth in an all-out attack to free mankind from bondage to the devil and his evil kingdom

of darkness. We who are in Christ must work to eliminate the ignorance of those still trapped in the darkness of Satan's deceptions. The antidote to ignorance is knowledge. Knowledge comes through truth, and truth brings liberation. Jesus said, *"If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free ... I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed"* (John 8:31-32; 34-36).

KNOWLEDGE: INFORMATION FROM GOD

Knowledge lies at the heart of the struggle between the two kingdoms, because knowledge is where the adversary mounted his original attack on humanity. Satan's most powerful weapon is ignorance, but to use it he must first destroy or distort true knowledge. That is exactly what he did with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He deceived and overcame them by attacking the source and substance of their knowledge.

The first thing God gave Adam for their protection was information: "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Gen. 2:16-17). Adam received knowledge; he *knew* what the boundaries were and what was expected of him. Furthermore, he passed this knowledge on to Eve after she appeared on the scene. As long as they obeyed God and respected his boundaries, they would live and prosper and enjoy unlimited fellowship with their Creator.

Satan, that serpent and deceiver, was very subtle in his approach. He did not launch a direct attack on God, but sowed seeds of distrust in Adam and Eve's minds that led them to doubt and question the truth and veracity of the knowledge God had given them and, therefore, to doubt God himself.

Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (Gen. 3:1-5).

Did God really say that?

The first thing the devil did was attempt to get Eve to doubt whether she correctly understood God's instructions: "Did God *really* say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" Next, he suggested to her that God was not being straightforward with them in his prohibition against eating the fruit from the tree in the middle of the Garden. "You will not surely die ... For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." In this he represented God as *knowing* both good *and* evil. In his omniscience, God understands the nature of evil, but in his *perfection* he does not *know* evil *experientially*. Satan knows evil because he is evil and, after their disobedience, Adam and Eve knew it also.

As a result of Satan's ploy, Adam and Eve developed a distorted understanding of the knowledge God had given them. They succumbed to the devil's manipulation and trickery to become "like God," although *they were already like him*. Once they took the devil's bait, they fell into sin and became like the devil. In their sin, Adam and Eve, rather than becoming like God, became less like God than they were before.

BATTLE OF THE KINGDOMS

Satan's tactics have not changed much. Today he still attacks us most often by attempting to draw us into doubting the knowledge we have received from the Lord. God tells us one thing; Satan tells us another. For example, God might say, "By My Son's stripes 2,000 years ago, you are healed today." Satan says, "You still feel the pain." Two conflicting pieces of information come into our minds, and we must decide which one is real, which one is true, which one we will believe and stand upon, and which one we will reject or disregard. If we choose to believe in the pain, then we remain "in the dark" concerning our healing.

This is an example of how the two kingdoms work against each other. The kingdom of darkness is out to deceive and destroy us. God's Kingdom of light gives us life because Jesus Christ, to whom the Kingdom belongs, is both light and life. As John the apostle wrote concerning Jesus, *"In him was life, and that life was the light of men"* (John 1:4). God's plan, which will surely come to pass at the time of his choosing, is for the Kingdom of his Son to undermine and replace the adversary's kingdom of darkness. On that day will come true the words of Revelation 11:15: *"The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever."*

Until that day, we who are believers must navigate the delicate balance of living in the kingdom of darkness, while walking in the Kingdom of light. The Lord has called us to "walk in the light as he is in the light" (1 John 1:7). Jesus said, *"You are the light of the world.... let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven"* (Matt. 5:14,16).

KNOWLEDGE IS IMPORTANT

The kingdom of darkness gets its power from that which we do not know. the truth we are ignorant of cannot protect us against Satan's deception. That is why we must devote ourselves to studying, learning, experiencing, and practicing the word of God. The light of knowledge dispels the darkness of deception and ignorance; the light of truth destroys the darkness of lies and error.

Satan hates the Word of God. He has no weapon that can stand against it. Whenever God's Word is taught or proclaimed, Satan immediately attempts to steal it away or to blind and confuse people's minds so that they do not understand and believe. As ruler of the kingdom of darkness, Satan fears the light. He fears the One who is the light, and he fears all who walk in the light. Satan is afraid of us because, as believers, we are children of the light. We possess and display in our lives the divine light of truth and knowledge spelling his destruction.

It is important to know the difference between what the world calls knowledge and the true knowledge of the Kingdom of God. The Bible teaches that all of us, as

descendants of Adam and Eve and spiritual heirs to their Sinfulness, are born as children of darkness. This means that we are born in ignorance. Even as we grow, and no matter how much education we receive, our fundamental ignorance remains until it is removed in Christ. No matter how smart we are and no matter how many degrees or titles we may carry after our name, until we come to know God through faith in Christ and begin to obey his Word, we remain in the darkness of spiritual ignorance. Without spiritual enlightenment of the divine truth of Christ, all other knowledge ultimately is irrelevant.

Knowledge unenlightened by the truth of God is dark knowledge. We may have a B.S., an M.S., and a Ph.D., but without the Lord all we have is dark information. It may be sufficient to help us navigate in the world of darkness, but by itself will never lead us to the truth. Apart from the revelation of the Spirit of God, none of us could ever find our way into the light. Darkly educated people are like those whom Paul described to his young protege, Timothy, as "always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7).

Darkness is the absence of accurate information about God. It is possible to spend a lifetime in the schools of the kingdom of darkness and never see the light. That is why Jesus told Nicodemus, an expert on the Jewish law, that he needed to be born again (see John 3:3). In effect, Jesus said to him "Nicodemus you need to start over. What you have learned up to now' is no good." 'A person of great learning who does not know the Lord is nothing more than a highly educated fool.

SURRENDERING YOUR HEAVENLY PASSPORT

Whenever a citizen of a country is convicted of a crime against the state and is about to be incarcerated, one of the first things the government requires is that he surrender his passport. A passport is one of our most significant symbols of citizenship because it is an official document that identifies our legal status as a citizen of a specific nation. It grants us the freedom as citizens to travel outside our country and still enjoy all the rights and privileges that we have at home.

In requiring a citizen to surrender his passport, the government is saying, " You are under judgment and during that time have forfeited your citizenship rights." Citizens have the right to move freely, earn a living, own property, buy food, drive on the streets, pay taxes, and receive the benefits and services provided by their government. A citizen who is convicted of a crime has fallen out of favor or position with the government. During the terms of the sentence he must forgo many of those rights and privileges, particularly freedom of movement. Incarcerated prisoners must endure great restrictions of their personal freedom. The system owns them and controls every aspect of their lives from the time they get up in the morning, to when they eat, what they do during the day, and when they go to bed.

This was Adam's experience when he disobeyed God's government. When Adam sinned, he lost his favored status. In other words, Adam fell out of position with the government and had all of his citizen rights cancelled. God took away his "passport" and Adam became a prisoner of darkness, a slave to sin, and was ruled by a "warden" named Satan.

PRISONERS IN A FOREIGN LAND

Every human being has been held captive in this precarious predicament. This is the universal human dilemma: Until we are enlightened and set free by Christ, we are all prisoners in the kingdom of darkness. All of us are born in a prison of sin and darkness. Because of our sinful nature inherited from Adam, we are unrighteous. Being *unrighteous* means that while we are still created "in God's image" (although somewhat marred), "we have no Kingdom rights." Our citizenship is nonexistent until our unrighteous condition is removed.

In Luke 4:18-19 Jesus describes his purpose in coming to earth: "*The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because he has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*" Jesus came to restore Our position in God's government—to make us righteous. He came to restore our "passport" so that we can once again claim and enjoy our citizen promises.

Until the right time for the coming of Jesus, God has set up a temporary government on earth called the covenant. The history, development, and specific circumstances of this covenant are related in the Old Testament. God established his covenant with Abram (later called Abraham), and promised to make of him a great nation through which all the people of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 12:2-3). Even though Abraham and his wife Sarai (later called Sarah) were childless and far beyond childbearing age, God assured them that this great nation of people would descend from a son born to them in their old age (Gen. 15:4).

The Scripture says that in light of this promise "Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness" (Gen. 15:6).

Righteousness means being in right position with God, getting into relationship with God's government and able to claim all the benefits promised in the covenant. When Abram believed God, the Lord declared him righteous on the basis of his faith, and Abram became a qualified citizen of the Kingdom of God, Abram received his "passport."

THE COMING OF THE GOD-MAN

Centuries later, Jesus would appear. In order to resolve the predicament, God would visit planet earth in the person of his Son. As a descendant of Adam he would open the way for man to become righteous. This would be accomplished through the offering of his blood on the cross. Jesus came to bring us back and synchronize our lives with the government of God, so that we can once more claim our citizen rights. It is in this manner that God sought to reconcile us to himself: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21).

The word *righteous* is a legal term, not a religious term, and means to position oneself rightly." Jesus came to make us righteous again, to put us back in right relationship with God so that we are qualified to receive the promises of God. Understanding this is critical to developing solid Kingdom thinking. When we are in right relationship with God, he can extend his Kingdom—His rulership—into our lives, and rule the earth through us. It is as we rule the earth in the power and presence of God that the Kingdom of heaven impacts our planet through our physical lives.

A FULL PARDON FOR MANKIND

Through Christ, our sins are forgiven and we receive a full pardon from God. A pardon is a powerful and potentially dangerous thing because it is irreversible. Once a king or ruler has pardoned someone, that person is forever free and exonerated of the crime or offense for which they were previously under judgment. Unlike a parole, which is a probationary state that still carries restrictions for the parolee, a pardon cleans the slate completely. A pardon declares its recipient to be as innocent as if the offense never occurred. Once a person is pardoned, the government returns his or her passport, and from that moment forward that person is free to travel, work, engage in business, buy and sell, and enjoy all other citizen rights and privileges without limitation. A pardon justifies and reestablishes a person's righteousness **in** the eyes of the law.

That is what Jesus did for all of us on the cross. his death and shed blood bought our pardon and made us righteous in the eyes of God once more. Our Kingdom citizenship and rights were restored, and we were positioned once again as recipients and heirs of all God's promises.

Righteousness is made possible through Christ's death and resurrection, but it is imparted to us through faith, just as it was for Abraham. When we believe, we become children of God. As Paul wrote to the Galatian believers, "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26-27, 29).

Many centuries-millennia even—passed between the time Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden and the time Christ came to restore our righteousness and return our "passport" to God's Kingdom. If Christ's death on the cross was so critical to mankind's restoration, why did God wait so long to send him to the earth?

CHAPTER TWO PRINCIPLES

1. God's purpose was for us to rule over the created order as vice regents under his authority.
2. Because God designed us to lead, the seeds of leadership lie within us, dormant until activated.
3. As God's vice-regents in this world, *we are the Kingdom of God on earth.*
4. The Kingdom of God on earth is God's rulership within the hearts and spirits of believers, and the Kingdom of heaven is when that rulership impacts the human earthly environment.
5. The Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of light, the light of the knowledge of the Lord.
6. The antidote to ignorance is knowledge. Knowledge comes through truth, and truth brings liberation.
7. Without spiritual enlightenment into the divine truth of Christ, all other knowledge ultimately means nothing.
8. Jesus came to restore our position in God's government—to make us righteous.
9. When we are in right relationship with God, he can extend his Kingdom—His rulership—into our lives, and rule the earth through us.

10. Through Christ, our sins are forgiven and we receive a full pardon from God.
11. Jesus could not come until a Kingdom model existed as a visual illustration to help people understand his teachings on the Kingdom.
12. Christ's Kingdom of truth is made up of citizens who are not only truth seekers but also truth followers.