

# THE CHURCH/KINGDOM'S IDENTIFYING MARKS (1)

By Keith Greer

In today's religious world, no subject is more misunderstood than the relationship between **God's kingdom and the church**. Religious experts seek to separate these two entities, while the Bible clearly addresses them as being the same. A thorough study of Old Testament prophecy makes it clear that God's reign over an eternal spiritual kingdom was part of His eternal plan. "They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power, to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations." {Psalm 145:11-13}

Premillennial doctrine is mistaken about God's promises concerning the nature of His eternal kingdom. This doctrine was conceived by those who have twisted, perverted, wrested and misunderstood the true teaching of the Holy Scriptures. Some have gone very far astray in their thinking. They actually believe that if a person's conduct becomes so unfaithful it is necessary to remove him from the church. Can he then be allowed to remain in the kingdom, so he can be eternally saved? This would, in essence, mean that one who might be unfit for the church would still be good enough for God's kingdom. What kind of reasoning is this? We could conclude that the church has a higher standard than the kingdom. Who can believe that?

Careful, open-minded investigation reveals that the two institutions—the church and the kingdom established on earth—are one in the same. The Bible clearly teaches that the Lord's church is God's kingdom on earth. Let's try to prove it by examining some of the identifying marks for both the church and the kingdom.

**Beginning Date and Place.** Kingdom: "Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the LORD'S house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it. Many people shall come and say, 'Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." {Isaiah 2:2,3} The Old Testament, in the book of Isaiah, foretold that the kingdom would be established in the "latter days" and that the word would go forth from Zion. Church: "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven." {Acts 2:4,5} This fulfilled the prophecy in Joel 2:28-32. Peter presented his argument concerning David's throne {Acts 2:29-36}. The people obeyed, and they were added to the church {Acts 2:47}. It was the right time and the right place.

**Territorial Borders.** Kingdom: "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." {Daniel 2:44} Church: "And He said to them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." {Mark 16:15} Finally, Jesus' last instruction to His apostles, prior to His ascension, was to wait in Jerusalem for power from on high. "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be

witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." {Acts 1: 8} Would God have two different institutions governing the world at the same time? Never! He exercises dominion and authority over ONE institution, His kingdom, the church! God wanted to give the whole world an opportunity to become part of His church – which is His kingdom! \*\*\*