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Three Usages of the “Kingdom of Heaven” in Scripture

by

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The kingdom is a major theme of scripture. It occupies a large place among the Old Testament prophets, and the teaching of John the Baptist and Christ. Not surprisingly, significant confusion about the kingdom has always existed. Part of the reason for the confusion is that the phrases “kingdom of heaven” and “kingdom of God” are used in several different ways. In this article, we want to identify the different usages in scripture and provide explanations and examples of each.

Scripture uses the phrase “kingdom of heaven” (or God) three different ways: 1) the place of God’s habitation and the saints’ eternal rest; 2) the church, or those who obtain citizenship and inheritance in heaven; and 3) the dominion over all people, nations, and

tongues Christ received at his ascension and coronation.

Let’s take a look at these each in order.

The Kingdom as the Habitation of God and the Saints

Apart from metaphoric use to describe governments and rulers, there are three usages of “heaven” in scripture; one refers to the kingdom of heaven. The three usages of heaven in scripture are: the firmament in which the birds fly; the firmament in which the stars are fixed; and the realm of the spirit, including Hades Paradise and Heaven, the dwelling place of God.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth...And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day." Gen. 1:1-8

The "heaven" of Gen. 1:1, seems to embrace the whole expanse over earth. The firmament that divides the waters above from those below refers to earth's atmosphere, which divides water that is condensed into liquid and is heavy, from water that is vapor and is light. It is in this firmament that the birds of the air fly:

"And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." Gen. 1:20

The atmosphere in which the birds fly and the clouds are hung may be styled the "first heaven." The firmament of heaven also describes the vast expanse of space, where the stars are set:

"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for season, and for days, and years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so." Gen. 1:14, 15

The outer space beyond earth's atmosphere may be called the "second heaven." The "third heaven" is the place of God's habitation (Eccl. 5:2) and the place of his throne (Ps. 11:4; Isa. 66:1). It is also called the "highest heaven" (Deut. 10:14) and the "heaven of heavens" (II Chron. 6:18). Paul refers to the third heaven by name in II Cor. 12:1-4, where he makes it include Hades Paradise, the interim abode of the righteous dead, and where Jesus went when he died (Lk. 23:43; Jn. 20:17; Acts 2:27).

Of these three usages of "heaven," two embrace the natural world, and one the supernatural. The firmament the birds and clouds fly in and that in which the stars are set are natural; they belong to the physical creation. The heaven which is the habitation of God is supermundane and spiritual, and, it alone among the heavens is called the "kingdom of God." It is to this place that Jesus referred when he told Nicodemus "*Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*" (Jn. 3:5). Jesus referred to this place again when he said "*Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the*

kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3). These passages both speak to the fact that the natural man is carnally minded and at enmity with God; he must undergo a fundamental change of heart and mind; he must turn away from sin and receive the gospel and things of the Spirit, before he can be saved and made an heir of eternal life. Another passage that refers to the kingdom of God as the place of the saint's eternal inheritance is in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians:

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." I Cor. 5:9-11

The washing and justification in the name of the Lord Jesus mentioned by Paul here doubtless is that first obtained by baptism in Jesus' name (Acts 2:38; 8:12, 16; 19:5; 22:16), and corresponds to the water of our rebirth Jesus mentioned to Nicodemus (Jn. 3:3-5). Certainly, that is the way the earliest Christian writers understood it. Tertullian wrote "We little fishes, after our Fish, are born in the water (of baptism)."¹ There is a play on words here. The word "fish" in Greek is *ἰχθύς*, the first letters of which make up the phrase *Ιησοῦς Χριστός Θεού Υἱος Σωτῆρ* ("Jesus Christ of God [the] Son [and] Savior"). Finally, it is to heaven Paul refers when he writes:

"Now this I say brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." I Cor. 15:50

The lesson of this verse is that which is gross and palpable cannot inherit that which is ethereal, unless it first put off the physical and be made spiritual. Paul indicates that this occurs for each of us as we are called out of this world one by one at the last trumpet marking our physical death (I Cor. 15:51, 52; II Cor. 5:4-8). The sum of these passages shows that the "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God" sometimes refer to the habitation of God and the place of the saints' eternal inheritance.

The Kingdom as the Church – The Vision of Daniel Two

Jesus received dominion over earth as absolute monarch at his ascension, and now rules the nations

¹ Tertullian, *On Baptism* 1

with a rod of iron. He guides all things for the advancement of the gospel and the church. Christ's dominion means that his church also has dominion and is a type of kingdom on earth. This is clear from the book of Daniel.

The book of Daniel was written and complied while the Jewish nation was in captivity in Babylon for its sin and rebellion. God had delivered all nations of the civilized world into the power of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. God showed Nebuchadnezzar in a dream that his kingdom was to be the first of four successive world empires until the coming of Christ and his kingdom. Nebuchadnezzar saw a dream in which these four empires were represented by an image of a man, divided into four parts, each part consisting of a different metal. The head of was of gold; the chest and arms of silver; the belly and thighs were bronze; the legs were of iron and the feet were partly of iron and partly clay. Nebuchadnezzar then saw a stone, cut out without human hand, strike the image upon its feet, reducing it to potsherds that were carried away by the wind; but the stone grew into a mountain and filled the whole earth.

The dream was interpreted for Nebuchadnezzar by the prophet Daniel, who indicated that each of the three successive kingdoms following Nebuchadnezzar's would be inferior to those preceding it, as reflected by the declining value of the metals and their position in the body. This inferiority did not consist in the size or power of the empire, for the empires that followed Babylon were larger and more powerful. Rather, the inferiority consisted in the *diminishing glory of the kingdoms* as represented by the *increasing division of the sovereign power* and the government's *policy and response to the people and worship of God*. The metals become *less precious* as the sovereign power was divided and shared. They also become increasingly *debased* as the governments they represent were inimical to God and persecuted his people.

Nebuchadnezzar was *absolute monarch* over earth and became a worshipper of the true and living God. He is therefore was portrayed as the image's head of gold (Dan. 2:37, 38).² However, in the empires that followed, the glory of the sovereign power was increasingly divided, and their governments opposed to the people and worship of God. Cyrus the Great and several of his successors were friendly to the faith,

² We believe Nebuchadnezzar was a type of Christ, similar to Solomon, in his rule over all earth as absolute monarch. Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom thus served as a foreshadow and adumbration of Christ's kingdom.

even helping rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, and financing its construction and sacrifices. However, the sovereign power was shared with the country's nobles, many of whom resisted the worship of God, even causing rebuilding the temple to cease for a time (Ezra 4:5-24; Zech. 3:1, 2). The Mede-Persian Empire was therefore represented by the chest and arms of silver. The kingdom of the Greeks was the third world empire. It was divided into four parts at Alexander the Great's death, and its monarchs were generally hostile to God's people and worship. Ptolemy Philopater entered the Jerusalem temple and attempted to compel the Jews in Alexandria to abandon worship of God, and to annihilate the race from among his people.³ Antiochus Epiphanes carried the outrage still further, erecting an idol in the Jerusalem temple, defiling the altar and temple with swine's blood, and putting to death Jews who refused to abandon the worship of God or circumcised their children.⁴ The kingdom of the Greeks was therefore represented by the belly and thighs of bronze.

Rome was the fourth world empire. Dan. 7:7 says that Rome would be "diverse" from the preceding kingdoms. This almost certainly refers to Rome's *republican* form of government, where the sovereign power was shared by the emperor, people, and senate, compared to the other world empires, each of which were monarchies. Rome is represented by legs of iron and feet of iron mingled with clay; the iron represents Roman government, the clay the subject peoples. Iron is the strongest, but the most corruptible of the metals. The feet of iron mingled with clay accords with the weakness and corruptibility of popular governments, and seems to signify Rome's policy of *direct rule* of subject nations by presidents and procurators ("they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men," Dan. 2:40-43). That is, where the other empires imposed tribute and allowed subject peoples to govern themselves, the Romans mingled themselves among the subject peoples by direct rule through Roman governors. This had the effect of imparting some of the iron strength of Roman rule, but it also contributed weakness, for iron and clay do not adhere to one another, and the Roman governors were greatly resented by the subject peoples ("they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay" Dan. 2:43).

The ten toes are best understood to represent the ten senatorial provinces created by Augustus in 27 B.C., which thereafter became a permanent feature and

³ III Macc.1-7

⁴ I & II Macc.

identifying mark of the empire. The Roman republic ended with the civil wars (49 B.C.) that brought Julius Caesar to power. With the death of Caesar (44 B.C.), the empire underwent a protracted period of war and unrest, as various factions all strove for the mastery. However, by 30 B.C., Augustus emerged as absolute ruler of the Roman world. In 27 B.C., Augustus set aside the provisional forms the government had operated under since the death of Caesar and settled the government upon a more permanent foundation. Under pretense of restoring the republic and surrendering the principate, Augustus returned the government of the empire to the senate. However, not all provinces were handed over. The senate was given charge of the provinces that were in a settled and peaceful condition, and required no legions, while Augustus retained the government of those upon the empire's borders. Augustus thus controlled the military power of the empire and preserved himself as absolute monarch, while the senate was given the outward show of sovereignty, but none of the substance. Dio Cassius explains: "His professed motive in this was that the senate might fearlessly enjoy the finest portion of the empire, while he himself had the hardships and the dangers; but his real purpose was that by this arrangement the senators will be unarmed and unprepared for battle, while he alone had arms and maintained soldiers." The division of the empire into imperial and senatorial provinces became an identifying feature of imperial Rome from and after Augustus. Dio Cassius explains Augustus' motivation thus:

*"His professed motive in this was that the senate might fearlessly enjoy the finest portion of the empire, while he himself had the hardships and the dangers; but his real purpose was that by this arrangement the senators will be unarmed and unprepared for battle, while he alone had arms and maintained soldiers."*⁵

The number of provinces ceded to the senate was ten:

"In 27 B.C. the provinces had been divided into two classes, Imperial and Senatorial, 'provinciae Caesaris,' and 'provinciae Senatus' or 'populi.' The latter were ten in number, Africa, Asia, Bithynia, Achaea, Illyricum, Macedonia, Crete and Cyrene, Sicily, Sardinia, and Hispania Baetica...The Imperial provinces in 27 B.C. were Gaul, Syria, Cyprus and Cilicia, and Hispania Citerior. The number was increased subsequently by the division of single provinces into two or more, and by the inclusion of all

*provinces constituted after 27 B.C., e.g. Moesia, Pannonia, and Dalmatia."*⁶

Thus, in Rome we find that the sovereign power was most divided ("the kingdom shall be divided" v. 41) and least glorious in terms of decent from monarchy to aristocracy to democracy, and Rome's direct rule of subject peoples by presidents and procurators. In terms of resistance to God's people and worship, Rome ranked first. Pilate was implicated in the murder of Christ and persecution over Stephen (John 19:19; Acts 8, 9; Rev. 12), and Nero was the world-wide, eschatological persecutor of God's people whose name was synonymous with the "beast" (Rev. 13:18; 17:10). The stone that smote the image is Christ; that it struck the feet and toes signifies that the coming of Christ's kingdom would occur in the period following 27 B.C. and the division of the empire into imperial and senatorial provinces. Jesus said his kingdom would come *in power* during the disciples' lives (Mark 9:1; cf. Matt. 16:27, 28) and tied it to the world events that witnessed the destruction of Jerusalem (Lk. 21:31). In Daniel chapter seven, the kingdom follows Christ's coming against the "little horn" out of the Roman Empire that persecuted the saints for three and a half years. This little horn was Nero, who persecuted the church for three and a half years from A.D. 64-68, but was destroyed by the "brightness of Christ's coming" and the "spirit of his mouth" (II Thess. 2:8).⁷ Thus, where Luke associates the kingdom's coming with the fall of Jerusalem, Daniel ties it to the destruction of Nero. Both are correct; for this was Christ putting his enemies beneath his feet, establishing his dominion in the earth. With his enemies among the Jews and Romans subdued, Daniel says,

⁶ Thomas Marris Taylor, *A Constitutional and Political History of Rome* (Methuen & Co., London, 1889), 464.

⁷ Among the events named by Daniel, in addition to his three and a half year persecution of the saints, that allow us to identify this as Nero is the three horns (provinces/client kingdoms) that were "plucked up" (rebelled or attempted to break from the empire) before the little horn (Dan. 7:8), but were subsequently subdued (Dan. 7:24). These three provinces or client kingdoms were Britain, Armenia, and Syria. Suetonius summarizes them, saying, Nero's reign was marked by "*a disaster in Britain, where two important towns were sacked and great numbers of citizens and allies were butchered; a shameful defeat in the Orient, in consequence of which the legions in Armenia were sent under the yoke, and Syria was all but lost.*" (Suetonius, *Nero*, XXXIX; Loeb ed.)

⁵ Dio Cassius, LIII, ii-xii; Loeb ed.

“And the same horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them, until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.” Dan. 7:21, 22

Here we see that by virtue of Christ’s dominion in the earth, the church also obtained dominion; not by direct government of the nations though the papacy or any such thing, but indirectly through the providence of Christ, who guides history for the advancement and advantage of his people and gospel. That the stone became a great mountain that filled the earth, speaks to the spread of Christianity to every part of the globe, becoming a spiritual kingdom into which men of all nations flow:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.” Isa. 2:2-4

Paul says that the *church* is the house of God (I Tim. 3:15; Heb. 3:6). Hence, the nations ascending to the house of the God of Jacob refers to the church and gospel. The epistle to the Hebrews confirms this point, where the writer says that in coming to the church we come to Mount Zion:

“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” Heb. 12:22-24

Thus, the kingdom of heaven sometimes refers to the church, the spiritual kingdom of Christ.

The Kingdom as Christ’s Dominion over Earth

We have seen that the phrase “kingdom of heaven” sometimes has in view the habitation of God and the place of the saint’s eternal inheritance; we have also seen that the phrase is used to describe the spiritual kingdom of the church. It remains only to show that the kingdom of heaven also describes the kingdom of Christ and that this entails 1) Christ’s government over earth’s nations, including judgment of the living and

the dead, 2) that this reign is from the right hand of God in heaven, and 3) Christ’s dominion began as a *matter of law* at his ascension, but was not possessed as a *matter of fact* until Jesus put his enemies beneath his feet at his second coming in A.D. 66-70.

1. Christ’s Government over Earth’s Nations

It is sometimes supposed that language saying “all peoples, nations, and tongues” would serve Christ merely refers to the universal call of the gospel, and that men of all nations would convert to Christ. However, Christ’s kingdom can in no way be limited to the church; all men are subject to his rule. That Christ is king and governor over earth’s nations is attested by many passages of scripture.

“Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Ps. 2:8, 9

Here we see that Christ rules the nations with a rod of iron, and dashes to pieces the kingdoms of those that refuse and rebel (*cf. Rev. 2:27; 12:5*). This language tracks closely that of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and the Stone smiting the image, breaking it to pieces, showing that more than the spiritual kingdom of the church is contemplated there. It was not the church that broke in pieces the Roman power; Christ accomplished this in the events of A.D. 66-70. It was Jesus putting his enemies (the Jews and Romans) beneath his feet that opened the way for the church to grow into “a great mountain filling the whole earth” (Dan. 2:35). Another passage showing Christ’s government over the nations is Dan. 7:13, 14, where Christ received dominion over earth at his ascension:

“I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, and all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” Dan. 7:13, 14

This is a coronation passage, parallel to Psalm two, above. In case there seems to be an ambiguity in the nature of the kingdom and dominion given to Christ, it is shown in the verses following, where Nero (the “little horn”) is destroyed and world dominion becomes Christ’s and the saints:

"But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Dan. 7:27

Here we see that the dominion possessed by Rome was taken from the "little horn" (emperor Nero) and given to Christ, and that by virtue of Christ possessing world dominion, the saints obtained dominion, too. A final passage describing Christ's rule over the world before moving on is Psalm 72:8-11:

"He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him."

The dominion described here includes his enemies; hence, more is involved than the church. Christ's kingdom is over earth and its nations. When we consider passages like these from the perspective of Jews living under Roman rule, it is not difficult to see why they supposed that the Messiah would be a national liberator who would vanquish Rome, and lead Israel to world power like the glory days of Solomon. However, they greatly mistook the case. Although Christ would save his people from the political oppression of their enemies, sin and death were far greater enemies, and it was these Jesus was principally concerned to destroy. Moreover, the promised salvation of God's people did not belong to Israel alone, but was common to all men who come to Christ in faith. Since the gospel was universal in nature, the national institutions of the Old Testament would all be cast aside as obsolete, allowing Christianity to overtake the world. And since Christ was king over all men and nations under heaven, it was imperative that he reign from heaven. This brings us to the next section.

2. Christ Reigns from Heaven

Jewish belief that Messiah would be a national liberator was based in part upon the assumption that Christ would reign from earthly Jerusalem upon David's throne. This stems from a misreading of prophecies about Christ. For example, in a very famous passage, the prophet Isaiah mentions Christ seated upon David's throne:

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his

name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of host will perform this." Isa. 9:6, 7

Another familiar passage, which we have looked at before, mentions Zion as the place of Christ's throne:

"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." Ps. 2:6

It is not difficult to see how Jews living before the Christian era would have expected Christ to rule on David's throne from earthly Jerusalem (Zion). However, this mistakes the case. David's throne was, in reality, the *Lord's throne in heaven*, which temporarily had been given to men to reign over national Israel upon earth. When the Israelites asked for a king to reign over them, God told Samuel that the sons of Israel had, in fact, rejected God as their king:

"And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them." I Sam. 8:8; cf. 12:12, 17

Thus, both Saul and David, and all who followed them as kings in Israel sitting upon David's throne, in reality, sat upon the throne of the Lord. Thus, when Solomon was anointed king, David rejoiced to see Solomon sit upon his throne (I Kings 1:27, 30, 35). Yet, scripture specifically states that Solomon in fact actually sat upon the *Lord's throne*:

"Then Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him." I Chron. 29:23

Removal of the throne of the Lord to earth was provisional until Christ came, when it would be returned to heaven. Thus, the place of Christ's throne in "Zion" actually refers to God's habitation in heaven. Psalm two says God set Christ upon his *holy hill of Zion*. Yet, Paul cites Psalm two in reference to Christ's resurrection (Acts. 13:33). Thus, the holy hill of Zion in this prophecy refers to heaven, not earth at all. In Psalm three, David says God heard his prayer out of his *holy hill*:

"I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah." Ps. 3:4

Did God hear David from heaven, or from earthly Jerusalem? From heaven, of course! Zion and the temple were *patterns and copies* of God's habitation in heaven, from which Moses was instructed to make the tabernacle and temple on earth (Ex 25:40). Thus, Habakkuk sets God's temple in heaven over against the inhabitants of earth: "*But the Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him*" (Hab. 2:20). But David places God's temple in heaven: "*The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven*" (Ps. 11:4). Thus, God's temple, throne, and holy hill all have heaven in view, and are specifically named as the place of Christ's reign. If there were any doubt, Psalm one hundred-ten settles the issue:

"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Ps. 110:1

Here scripture expressly states that Christ would rule from God's right hand *in heaven*. Several New Testament passages describe this as being fulfilled in Christ's ascension to heaven (Acts 2:33; Heb. 10:12, 13). When Jesus told his disciples shortly before his ascension "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18), he alluded to his receipt of the kingdom and dominion. Peter said Christ "*is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him*" (I Pet. 3:22). What this means for us is, that even though we do not see Christ seated upon David's throne reigning from the heavenly Zion, we are told that it is an accomplished fact and may trust it implicitly.

3. The Kingdom came in Power at Christ's return in A.D. 66-70

We have seen that Christ's reign over earth's nations is from heaven. Jesus received this kingdom and dominion as a *matter of law* at his ascension and coronation. But it was not his as a *matter of fact* until he put his enemies beneath his feet in the events of A.D. 66-70. The case is analogous to Herod the Great, who sailed to Rome where he was made king by the Roman senate, but was three years defeating his enemies and bringing his kingdom into subjection. Herod received the kingdom as a *matter of law* from the Roman senate in the winter of 39 B.C., but it was not until the summer/fall of 36 B.C. that he subdued his enemies and made the kingdom his as a *matter of fact*. We believe scripture shows a similar pattern was true of Christ.

In the gospel of Luke, Jesus tells the parable of the nobleman who went into a far country to "receive a kingdom and to return." But his citizens sent a message after him, saying, "We will not have this man reign

over us." When the nobleman returned having received the kingdom, he had his enemies, who would not have him reign over them, slain before him (Lk. 19:11-27). This parable was told by Jesus at his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, because the people and disciples supposed that the kingdom of God would immediately appear. The point of the parable was that the kingdom would come only *after* Christ's ascension to heaven and his return (second coming) to put his enemies (the Jews and Romans) beneath his feet. Thus, when instructing the disciples about the destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus said

"So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass way, till all be fulfilled." Lk. 21:30, 31

Here the coming of the kingdom is expressly tied to the fall of Jerusalem, not Pentecost or any other event. In Dan. 7:24-27, the coming of the kingdom is tied to defeat of Nero. This is because the events of A.D. 66-70 were when Jesus put his enemies beneath his feet: Nero perished; the Roman empire was thrown into a series of civil wars known as the "year of four emperors," and Jerusalem was destroyed. Other passages showing that the kingdom came in these events include the epistle to the Hebrews. Hebrews alludes to the nearness of Christ's coming when he stated that Jesus *very shortly* would come in wrath upon his enemies and to save his people from their persecutors:

"For yet it is a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Heb. 10:37

And

"Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.' And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." Heb. 12:26-28

Here we see the coming of the kingdom is associated with the eschatological "shaking" of heaven and earth. "Shaking the heavens and earth" refers to the overthrow of nations and civil governments as Christ took up his reign and put his enemies beneath his feet. This may be seen by consulting Haggai, who the writer of Hebrews quotes:

"For thus saith the Lord of hosts; Yet, once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, and

the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts...I will shake the heavens and the earth; and I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms, and I will destroy the strength of the kingdoms of the heathen; and I will overthrow the chariots, and those that ride in them; and the horse and their riders shall come down, everyone by the sword of his brother." Hagg. 2:6-7,21, 22

This eschatological shaking is referred to in the gospel of Mark as the kingdom coming *in power*:

"And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."

It was then that Christ sat upon the throne of his glory and judgment of the living and dead began, and has continued ever since (Matt. 25:31-46, II Tim. 4:1; cf. Matt. 16:27, 28). Christ therefore is Lord of the living and dead, and rules the nations with a rod of iron. This does not mean the nations do not rebel; the very scriptures that predict Christ's rule state the nations will rebel. But Christ rules them with an iron rod and chastens those that resist by visiting them with wars, famines, and other calamities, always guiding history for the advancement of the church and gospel.

Conclusion

The kingdom of heaven is used three different ways in scripture: 1) The habitation of God and the place of the saints eternal rest; 2) the spiritual kingdom of the church; and 3) the dominion Christ received over earth's nations and peoples at his ascension, but which he put beneath his feet at his second coming in A.D. 66-70.

What is the Regeneration?

There is some confusion about the "regeneration," so we thought a few words were in order to clarify use of this term.

The term "regeneration" (Gk. παλιγγενεσίας) occurs twice in our English versions, once in reference to our *conversion*, and once in reference to the *resurrection*. In Titus appears thus:

"But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7).

The phrase "washing of regeneration" shows that the "renewing" contemplated here occurs at our obedience to the gospel, and is equal to the rebirth of faith and baptism (water and Spirit) (cf. Jn. 3:3-5). Ananias thus told Paul "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and **wash away thy sins**, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16; emphasis added). The "washing away of sins" here answers the "washing of regeneration" in Titus 3:5. Jesus said "except a man be born again, he cannot see [enter] the kingdom of God" (Jn. 3:3). Paul said that by the washing of regeneration we become "heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:7). The passages are thus parallel and speak to our conversion through obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Regeneration = Conversion

Washing of Regeneration	"Be baptized and wash away thy sins"
Renewing of the Holy Ghost	"Born of water and the Spirit"
Should be Made Heirs	"Except he be born again, he cannot see [enter/inherit] the Kingdom of God"

The other occurrence of the word "regeneration" is in Matthew's gospel where Jesus told the apostles:

*"Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the **regeneration** when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life"* (Matt. 19:28, 29).

I used to believe this had reference to the apostles' government of the church during their earthly lives, but now see this in reference to our inheritance in the next life. The timing of the passage states it belongs to the time when Christ shall "sit in the throne of his glory." Although Jesus sat down at the right hand of God at his ascension, the "throne of his glory" has specific

reference to post-parousia judgment. In his Olivet Discourse, Jesus thus told the disciples

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations” etc” (Matt. 25:31, 32).

Here is the identical phrase clearly set in the context of Christ’s judging the dead, sending some to eternal punishment and others to eternal life (vv. 32-46). The “throne of his glory” thus refers to Jesus upon the throne of judgment, meting out the eternal reward of men (*cf.* II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11). Since this time of judging began at the resurrection (and continues today), the time of the apostles sitting as judges also began at the resurrection. Those that inherit eternal life share in Christ’s government of the world and nations *from heaven*. This is the meaning of the parable of the talents, when the nobleman (Christ) says to his servant, “Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities” (Lk. 19:17). Notice here that at the time of judgment, the faithful steward is given the government over *cities*. Clearly, this does not speak to anything in earthly life, for there was no reward at A.D. 70 which the saints on earth received that can reasonably answer this description. This also contradicts the idea that the world would be destroyed by fire at Christ’s coming, for there would then be no cities for the righteous to govern. The better view, therefore, is that receipt of the government of cities points to the *next life* and the saints’ share in government of the earth from heaven with Christ. Jesus told the church at Thyatira

“He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father” (Rev. 2:26, 27).

Christ’s rule over the nations with a rod of iron belongs to the time of his resurrection and ascension (Ps. 2:9; Acts 13:33). Therefore, the saints’ participation in this rule belongs to the time of *their* resurrection in heaven. To the church in Laodicia, Jesus said:

“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcome, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev. 3:21).

“Overcoming” imports being faithful unto death in the coming persecution. Those that abided faithful, laying down their lives in martyrdom, would be rewarded with eternal life, and share in Christ’s government of earth (“sit in his throne”). Paul thus says,

“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself” (II Tim. 10-12).

“Glory” clearly signifies our inheritance in heaven. Paul says those who die with Christ would thus live with him, and those that suffer for him in martyrdom will also *reign with him*. A final passage that should cinch the point: Paul told the Corinthians

“Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?” (I Cor. 6:2, 3)

Here “judging the world” is set in apposition to judging “thing that pertain to this life.” Paul argues that, as the saints will be made judges of men and angels in the *next life*, how much more ought the church to be competent to judge matters affecting the church in this life? In all these cases, we thus see that “living,” “reigning,” and “judging” are other-worldly, and are the reward received in the next life. And if there were any doubt, this very thing is shown in Rev. 20:4-6, where the righteous dead are in Hades Paradise and “live and reign” with Christ, seated upon thrones of judgment. Therefore, when Jesus told the apostles that in the regeneration they would share his government, seated upon 12 thrones, it seems clear that he is referring to their several rewards *at the resurrection*, and not their administration of the church during their earthly lives. This is confirmed by the closing words of Christ, saying,

“And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”

The apostles had asked what their reward would be, seeing they had left all to follow him. Jesus answered by saying they would receive crowns and thrones in the next life, when they assumed their places next to him in glory.

Conclusion

The regeneration speaks to the resurrection of saints in heaven, where they share in the reign of Christ and participate in government of earth, helping direct the course of history for the advancement of Christ’s gospel and the amendment of earth’s erring nations.

Questions from our Readers

Q: Good issue, Kurt. Thanks. Interesting insights into “trump.” I like the idea of a last trumpet for each of us. I have never heard that Jesus defeating death meant Hadean death. I need to cogitate on that!

A: The trumpet issue is an important one. There are only three possibilities as I see it regarding the change at the last trumpet: 1) There was a 1st century rapture/translation of the living to heaven when the dead were raised (Ed Steven's view); 2) the "change" was legal and covenantal (Max King/Don Preston view); 3) there is more than one trumpet in the passage: one that raised the dead, and another when each of us is called out of this world at physical death and that we are "changed" as we die. I don't see any way around these three alternatives, and have settled on the last as the only one that is defensible.

Ed Stevens' view cannot be right inasmuch as there is both scriptural and secular history, which attests that the saints survived the destruction of Jerusalem and were not raptured or translated. For example, Eusebius records that the disciples came together after Jerusalem's fall to appoint the successor of James, showing the saints plainly were not translated to heaven (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* III, xi). The Max King/Don Preston view cannot be right inasmuch as all scripture places the end of the Old Testament and the arrival of justification at the cross, not A.D. 70, so that nothing of significance relative to salvation from sin occurred at Jerusalem's fall. Hence, the "change" could not have been "covenantal." That leaves the third alternative, which holds that the "change" was not simultaneous with the Hadean resurrection, but describes the putting off of the physical body at death, making it parallel to II Cor. 5:1-10. If so, I Cor. 15:52 must contemplate more than one trumpet: one that raised the Hadean dead, and another that calls each of us out of this world at life's end. Since this is corroborated, or at least consistent with the Greek, I see no reason to doubt its correctness.

Q: Kurt: Like you I reject the old corporate resurrection view of Max King. I had for some time held to Ed Stevens rapture view. However, apart from other problems with the latter, my studies in Isaiah have shown me the impossibility of this view as well.

Isa. 66:19 has those who escape the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem going out to evangelize the surrounding nations, not floating off to the skies.

Also, as R. Otto pointed out, the language in 1 Thess 4 is apocalyptic and therefore figurative (just like everywhere else such language occurs). What is your current take on 1 Thess 4? I'd really appreciate some guidance here bro!

A: Thanks for writing. My view is that the word "then" in 1 Thess. 4:17 shows *sequence in time* and "together" shows the *destination*, not time, of our reunion with those gone on before:

"The dead in Christ shall rise first, THEN we which are alive and remain shall be caught up TOGETHER with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air."

The word "then" clearly shows a sequence in time. The only question is, how long? Does then show substantially simultaneously, or one-by-one as we experience physical death? The word itself says nothing and can apply equally to both scenarios. Those, like Ed Stevens, who opt for the simultaneous rapture/translation view rely upon the word "together" and give it the meaning of simultaneous translation/rapture. But, not even this word need carry this meaning. If we say that Japan, Germany, and Italy were defeated *together* in WWII, does that mean all were defeated at the same time? Of course not. Some were defeated and surrendered earlier than others. Or if we say many European nations have joined *together* in the European Union, does that mean they joined at the same time? Or if we say that many conservatives and constitutionalists got caught up *together* in the Tea Party movement, does that mean they joined at the same time? No. In all these cases "together" shows the *point of destination*, not the time of catching up, joining, etc. In the same way, when Paul says the "dead would rise first, *then* we which are alive and remain shall be caught up *together* with them," he is merely showing that we shall one day join them in clouds, when Christ calls us out of this world at life's end.

That, at least, is my understanding of the passage. Good call by the way on Isa. 66:19 - there are several such passages and historical sources that indicate the saints survived the end and were not translated.

Q: Hi Kurt. Thanks for your Newsletter. I do have a question though about something you wrote.

[Quote] As suggested by John's statement that Christ would "gather the wheat into the garner," simultaneous with this harvest of wrath, there was also a harvest of God's people into the eternal kingdom (spiritual realm). There are different views how this harvest or gathering was accomplished; some suppose an actual "rapture" or "translation" occurred. Against this view is the fact that many of the disciples outlived the end of the age, particularly the apostle John, so that the notion of the mass translation of saints lacks historical support.[End quote]

I was surprised to read this and wondered what your reference was. I know that Irenaeus wrote that Papias heard the apostle John teach, yet Eusebius wrote, that Papias himself "indicates that he was by no means a hearer or eyewitness of the holy apostles" (Eusebius, Church History, quoted in Apostolic Fathers, page 313). As these are the earliest references I have found to someone actually claiming that the apostles lived beyond the destruction of Jerusalem, I thought you might have another. Thanks again, Ron.

A: Thanks for writing. There are several Biblical and historical sources that indicate the disciples (not necessarily the apostles) lived beyond AD 70. For example, Isa. 66:19 depicts those that survived the events of AD 66-70 as going out and evangelizing the world. Matt. 16:27, 28 says "*there are many standing here that shall not taste of death TILL they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.*" The word TILL or UNTIL indicates that they would live to see the events, and *only then* die. John 21:19-23 is generally understood to say that John would live until Christ's coming, which some thought meant he would be translated/raptured and not see death, but which John himself denies, indicating that his living until Christ returned did not mean he would not experience physical death. Also, Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* gives by name the succession of bishops in Jerusalem, with no break in the sequence or suggestion those alive in AD 70 were raptured away, stating instead that those who were still alive after Jerusalem's capture came together and appointed Simeon the son of Clopas to succeed James as bishop. *Eccle. History III, xi.* And the belief that John lived at least until the time of Domitian is well attested, as Irenaeus himself says. *Against Heresies 5, 30, 3, Ante Nicene Father Vol. 1, p. 559, 560.*

Q: Kurt, if you'd like to go ahead and have more than this tease-ad in your emailer, you're welcome to the full

one; just let me know if you do, and I'll send it along. But the above is fine. Thanks.

Calling All Full Preterists! If you, like so many out there, are looking for others of similar eschatology, this is for you! To decide if you too would like to take part in a program of networking full Preterists in the U.S. and Canada together in specific locales, please take a moment to read about the database I'm compiling! Just visit SiteForTheLord.com/id20.html, then let me know if you'd like to be added to the list and be made aware of other Prets (or those interested in studying Preterism) in your area. Also, please consider advertising this on your respective websites. Thank You. ~Tony Everett Denton (author of Hebrews: From Flawed to Fulfilled!)

Q: Kurt, is the following correct?

OT believers went to Paradise in Hades
OT unbelievers went to "Hell" in Hades
At the Cross, the death penalty for sin was erased for believers

Between the Cross and 70 AD,

Unbelievers who died went to "Hell" in Hades
Christians who died went to Paradise in Hades

At 70AD, Hades was "cleaned out"

OT believers in Paradise went to be with Christ (resurrection)
OT unbelievers in "Hell" were judged, punished, and destroyed (resurrection?)
Christians in Paradise went to be with Christ (resurrection)

After 70AD

When believers die, they go to be with Christ (resurrection)
When unbelievers die, they are judged, punished, and destroyed (resurrection?)

A: Looks correct, except that the term for "hell" in Hades was "Tartarus" (II Pet. 2:4). It is my belief that Tartarus probably still exists as a place of punishment until the lost are annihilated. Luke 12:47 says that each will be punished with severity equal to their guilt and knowledge. This implies that a place of punishment before annihilation still exists. If so, the destruction of "death and Hades" in Rev. 20, seems to mean only that part which the saved went to (Paradise/Abraham's bosom).

Q: I have a question: Do you have an explanation of Zechariah14:3, 4?

3 Then the LORD will go out and fight against those nations, as he fights on a day of battle. 4 On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south.

I believe this chapter is talking about the destruction of Jerusalem, and the nations referred to here are the nations that destroyed Jerusalem. When did God fight against those nations? What "day" is being spoken of in these verses? Any help here would be greatly appreciated.

A: God's fighting against the nations probably refers to the "year of four emperors" and subsequent world events by which God and Christ began actively ruling the world with a rod of iron, destroying idolatry, and making Christianity the dominate religious force in the Empire and world.

The year of four emperors describes the one year period beginning with Nero's death in AD 68. Nero's death launched the empire in a succession of civil wars in which Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian all became contenders for the throne. These civil wars destroyed Italy and embroiled much of the empire in fire and sword. At the very time Titus was besieging Jerusalem, the forces of his father, Vespasian, were besieging the city of Rome. AD 70 thus witnessed the destruction of the two greatest temples in the world: the temple in Jerusalem, and the temple Jupiter Capitalanus in Rome.

Naturally, "day" in this and similar cases is figurative for the "time" when these judgments were executed. The "day" or "time" when these occurred began in AD 68 and have continued ever since, since Jesus now rules the nations with a rod of iron, and commands all men everywhere to repent.

P.S. - Note that the year of four emperors shows that the second coming was not confined to Palestine, but was a world-wide (oikumene).

Herodotus on the Winged Serpents of Arabia

There is in a place in Arabia, situated very near the city of Buto, to which I went on hearing of some winged serpents; and when I arrived there, I saw bones and spines of serpents in such quantities as it would be impossible to describe: there were heaps of these spinal bones, some large, some smaller, and other still less; and there were great numbers of them. The place in which these spinal bones lie scattered is of the following description: it is a narrow pass between two mountains into a spacious plain; this plain is contiguous to the plain of Egypt; it is reported that, at the beginning of spring, winged serpents fly from Arabia toward Egypt; but that ibises, a sort of bird, meet them at the pass, and do not allow the serpents to go by, but kill them: for this service the Arabians say that the ibis is highly reverenced by the Egyptians, and the Egyptians acknowledge that they reverence these birds for this reason...the form of this serpent is like that of the water-snake; but he has wings without feathers, and as like as possible to the wings of a bat. Bk. II, ch. 75

Again, Arabia is the farthest of the inhabited countries toward the south; and this is the only region in which grow frankincense, myrrh, cassia, cinnamon, and ledanum. All these, except myrrh, the Arabians gather with difficulty. The frankincense they gather by burning styrax, which the Phoenicians import into

Greece; they take it by burning this; for winged serpents, small in size, and various in form, guard the trees that bear frankincense, a great number round each tree. These are the same serpents that invade Egypt. They are driven from the trees by nothing else but the smoke of the styrax. The Arabians say this also, that the whole land would be filled by these serpents if some such thing did not take place with regard to them, as I now happens to vipers...So also, if vipers and the winged serpents of Arabia multiplied as fast as their nature admits, men could not possibly live. But now, when they couple together, and the male is in the very act of impregnating, as he emits the seed, the female seizes him by the neck and clinging to him, never lets him go until she has gnawed through him. In this manner the male dies, and the female pays the following retribution to the male: the offspring, while yet in the womb, avenging their father, eat through the matrix; and having gnawed through her bowels, thus make their entrance into the world. But other serpents, which are not hurtful to men, lay eggs, and hatch a vast number of young. Now vipers are found in all parts of the word; but flying serpents are abundant in Arabia, and nowhere else: there they appear to be very numerous. Bk. III ch. 107-109

[Editor: Josephus confirms Herodotus' account, and Isaiah also mentions flying serpents (Isa. 14:29)]

The Violent Face of Futurism:

Fifth Monarchists or Fifth Monarchy Men

[Editor's note: Futurism is punctuated by a recurring history of fanaticism, radicalism, and violence. In this article, we look at the "Fifth Monarchy" men, who thought that the "fifth world empire" of Daniel two and seven would soon appear, marked by Christ's second coming. These radical Futurists contributed to the English civil war under Charles I, the kangaroo court and judicial murder of the king, and the rise of the Puritan commonwealth under the military dictatorship of Oliver Cromwell. The article is adapted from Exlibris.org.]

Summary

The Fifth Monarchy Men or the Fifth Monarchists were a quasi-political religious movement which was prominent from 1649-61. It was based on a strong millennium message, they hoped to reform Parliament and the government for the imminent coming of Christ's Kingdom on Earth.

The movement was prominent throughout the Commonwealth and was organized. After their conversion of England, the new English Fifth Monarchist army of saints would march on Europe, and would eventually convert the whole world with the spirit of Jesus Christ.

The "Fifth Monarchy" or the "Fifth Kingdom" is a biblical reference. The reference is based on the Old Testament text (Daniel 2: 44) of a prophecy in a dream by King Nebuchadnezzar. He envisioned five kingdoms in history, and the last, or Fifth Kingdom would usher in a new kingdom on earth. Millenarianism was a popular message of the Interregnum period (1649-1660). "The godly being in league with God" (1626) wrote Thomas Gataker.

Works such as Henry Archer's: *The Personal Reign of Christ upon Earth* (1642) became a popular work on the Millennium during the period. It foretold of the conversion of the Jews (1650), the destruction of the Turks, and the second coming of Christ (1700). The Civil War was seen as a metaphor of the new religious fervor. The execution of King Charles I in January 1649 became a sign from God ushering in His New Kingdom to many of the faithful.

The Fifth Monarchy Men were a radical religious movement that used both social and political pressure to affect their message and vision of a new religious "Golden Age". They represented a diverse collection of various religious and political views. They hoped to replace the Long Parliament (1640-48) and its replacement the Rump Parliament (1648-53) with another "church-parliament" favorable to their views.

The Fifth Monarchists movement represented a broad group of interests. The membership might be divided into two general groups. One group saw the conversion of a corrupt English society into a new religious community of the saints was only possible through the power of prayer, and by setting an example for others to follow, *i.e.* being in society but not being of the society. Another group argued for change through political action and through the force of arms. Members of both of these groups tended to hold moderate views in their early days.

The early beginnings of the Fifth Monarchists movement may date from the Norwich area in 1649. Both Independents and Baptist laymen and ministers had joined the New Model Army during the Civil War and many rose to positions of trust and influence in their respective regiments. Many of these individuals in turn influenced others with their millennium message which fed into the general Fifth Monarchist message.

Many of these individuals came from General and Particular Baptists congregations. Among these were the so-called Seventh-Day Men, or Sabbatarians who worshiped on Saturday following the Jewish traditions. Between 1650-1660 there were strong religious and political ties of support between these various groups against the Cromwell government.

Some of the more prominent Fifth Monarchy Men were London preachers including: Christopher Feake (1612-1683?) of Christ Church (Newgate) ca. 1649; John Rogers (1627-1665?) from Dublin ca. 1652; John Canne (1590?-1667?) of the Robert Overton Regiment at Hull; John Simpson (d. 1662), and Vavasor Powell (1617-1670). These men preached on the coming of Christ with specific reference to the *Book of Daniel*, Chapter 7.

Not all of these preachers may have held the same interpretations of the text of the *Book of Daniel*. Common themes included: 1) prepare for the Second Kingdom, 2) reform the government for Christ's rule, 3) greed and power would be replaced with brotherly love, 4) tithes and taxes should cease, 5) more care to be given for the poor, 6) the release of debtors from prison, 7) pay the back salaries due the New Model Army.

The Fifth Monarchs were early supporters of Oliver Cromwell, "God's Instrument" against the Royalists and pro-Presbyterian members in the Long Parliament. They had hoped that Cromwell would support their holy mission to change this corrupted society into a new Saintly kingdom on Earth anticipating the return of Jesus Christ.

The Fifth Monarchs cause found support with a number of groups including the New Model Army and the Leveller movement. The New Model Army uprisings of 1649 were crushed in Oxfordshire, and they were eventually paid their back salaries. The Leveller movement was dealt a heavy blow when their leaders were arrested and jailed in 1649. The Fifth Monarch Men were one of the few remaining major organized movements to oppose Cromwell's government after 1650.

The Fifth Monarchy Men were able to influence the election of a number of the 150 delegates to the Barebone's Parliament (July-December 1653) which had been called by Cromwell to fill the void left by the Rump Parliament which Cromwell had dissolved earlier in 1653. Concerned by certain proposed liberal policy reforms presented at the Barebone's Parliament, the more conservative supporters of Cromwell dissolved the Parliament rather abruptly in December 1653.

The closing of the Barebone's Parliament caused a major outcry of anger from the other duly elected members of the Parliament and their supporters which included the Fifth Monarchy Men and others. Their cries of protest fell on the deaf ears of the Cromwellian government for redress according to Cromwell's critiques.

Within the month, *The Instrument of Government* (16 Dec. 1653) had established a new English constitution. Oliver Cromwell was appointed as the new Lord Protector, he was not elected. This angered both the Fifth Monarchs' and others groups still seeking more personal and religious freedom promised during the Civil War. Cromwell's political inability and or his lack of conviction to institute various personal changes

within the new government angered many of his former supporters. Cromwell seemed to have betrayed them in their eyes for his own personal political ambitions from his critiques. Some even commented that they had only replaced one old yoke with a new one.

General Thomas Harrison (1610-1660)

General Thomas Harrison (1610-1660) was an interesting man who rose from obscurity to a national war hero. He came from a good family in Newcastle-under-Lyme; his father had been its mayor, four times. He studied law in London until the outbreak of the Civil War. He joined up and advanced in rank as a cavalry officer. He fought well at Naseby and Langport with the New Model Army, and was respected in the ranks.

He was elected MP for Wendover, Bucks.(1646), but sailed for Ireland to fight the next year. He was at Putney in October 1647. He was the Commander of Forces in Wales (1649) and Commander of Forces in England (1650). Harrison had been a good friend of Cromwell, and a comrade in arms.

Harrison was elected a delegate to the Barebone's Parliament (1653). He was a religious man, and began to object to policies of Oliver Cromwell and his government on religious grounds since the demise of the Rump Parliament (1653). The questionable actions of the members of the Barebone Parliament (1653) had an impact, and the sudden elevation of Oliver Cromwell as the new "Lord Protector" had only helped to increase his own objections of his old friend, and his government.

Harrison became a leading spokesman for the Fifth Monarchs and their movement. Harrison was well respected as a national military hero. He was a good speaker able to rally support for the Fifth Monarchs and their anti-Cromwellian government message from Wales to London. The Fifth Monarchs had strong support in London, East Anglia, and Wales.

Under the Protectorate (1653-60), Harrison was stripped of his Army commission. Cromwell was instrumental in having Harrison sent to prison twice on what were questionable charges of subversion against the government. Harrison was later executed by the Loyalists at the Restoration (1660) as a consequence of having been a signer of the original death warrant of King Charles in 1649, a fate which Oliver Cromwell escaped.

Thomas Venner (1608-1661)

There were various radical militant elements in the Fifth Monarch Men movement, probably the best known and maybe the most radical were the Vennerites named after their leader, Thomas Venner (1608?-1661). Venner was a cooper by trade, and a popular lay preacher with a large active congregation in Swan Alley off Coleman Street, London from 1655-1661.

Venner was born in Littleham, Devon. In 1633. he was working as a cooper in London, and was associated with Praisegod Barebone (Barbon, or Barbone) and Stephen More. In 1637, Venner immigrated to New England and raised a family. He is known to have resided in Salem, Mass, and later in Boston. He held a number of jobs and positions some of them more legal than others, according to critics. He returned to England during late 1651 a few steps ahead of the Boston police according to some accounts.

After returning to London, Venner became familiar with the Fifth Monarchy Men. In 1655, Venner worked as a cooper at the Tower of London, he was arrested and gaoled on suspicion of trying to blow it up. By 1656, he was the minister to a growing London congregation with Fifth Monarchist leanings in Swan Alley, off of Coleman Street. During 1656/57, Venner and members of his congregation were making plans to overthrow the Cromwell government. Many of the Fifth Monarchy Men leaders including General Thomas Harrison were opposed to Venner's plan, and argued against it.

The plan included the distribution of a work: *A Standard Set Up* written by Venner's son-in-law outlining their aims. The objective was to overthrow the government, and establish a theocracy. But before the plan could be put into action many individual were arrested by the government but not put on trial. Venner and two of his associates were confined in the Tower of London on Cromwell's order until 1659. Additional attempts continued to be made on Cromwell life by other Fifth Monarchy Men.

The government made regular raids on suspected Fifth Monarchy Men congregations, and others looking for arms caches, weapons, and horses sometimes with success. This did not deter the more militant members who found financial supporters willing to supply arms.

The last years of Oliver Cromwell's reign he often exercised his ire towards those he could not control. With the death of Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), the Lord Protectorship was passed to his son Richard Cromwell (1626-1712) who occupied the office of Lord Protector which he did not seek. It was lackluster

reign lacking the personal verve of his father which was short lived.

Richard Cromwell was replaced by a new Rump Parliament. They too did not supply the necessary security or stability sought by the power brokers, or address the fear of radical unrest in society. Overtures were undertaken to initiate negotiations with the House of Stuart.

With the reconciliation efforts of General Monck, and the wealthy power brokers with others, they brokered a dialogue with King Charles II of Scotland. The Protectorate after Oliver Cromwell failed to live up to its potential. The political and social unrest drove the power brokers to seek a more stable political and social institution which became the monarchy, and the House of Stuart.

This would not be a return to the old policies of King Charles I. The Revolution and the Protectorate established a major new relationship between the State, the Parliament and the Crown. The Civil War had changed the course of English history for better or worse.

The new government reforms began to slowly take hold throughout the country and in London. Those individuals that participated in the Civil War and had sacrificed for and anticipated a new and better English civil society, many of them felt betrayed by the return to the monarchy and a to Church of England with its possible popish leanings.

Venner's Rising 1661

With the reinstatement of King Charles II underway, one of the first things done by the new government was to find, and to arrest all of the available signers of the Death Warrant of Charles I. Major-General Thomas Harrison (1616-1660) a latter major leader of the Fifth Monarchy Men was one of the signers. Harrison's torture and execution on 13 October 1660 raised the ire of many Englishmen including Thomas Venner and his follow supporters against the "questionable" new government.

After the cruel death of Harrison, and the growing fear of a return of the old order of Church and State, and a new popish Church of England, Venner decided his last best hope of taking over the new fledgling government was at hand.

Thomas Venner (d. 1661) and some fifty rebels had plotted to overthrow the new fledgling government of

King Charles II in London by the force of arms. This was a very desperate effort to seize the seat of government before the coronation of Charles II. The work: *A Doore of Hope* (1661) addressed to Parliament stated their fears of a new monarchy, the return of bishops, and the revival of popery in the Church of England.

What is known as Venner's Rising happened on 1-4 January 1661. Venner with his Fifth Monarchy Men, and other supporters attacked the centers of power in and about Greater London under the cry "King Jesus and the heads upon the gates".

The rebels initially instilled fear, unrest and killed some individuals. The influx of professional soldiers brought the uprising to a quick end. Many rebels were killed, some were captured by military units, or even escaped. The wounded Veneer and the other rebel leaders were tried and executed on 19 Jan. 1661. Venner was hanged, drawn and quartered outside of his own congregation doors. Venner represented a radical minority position of the larger movement.

Some one hundred Fifth Monarchy Men, and many Quakers supporters were arrested and imprisoned by the new government. Many of these "rebels" were not necessarily active in the actual rising itself, but were labeled as potential radicals elements for comments against the new government.

Venner's Rising did not end the Fifth Monarchist presence in England. Many of their congregations across the country continued unabated after the Restoration (1660) into the 18th Century. Charles II and his government kept a careful eye on these congregations, and its leadership.

Many of the suspected "radical" Fifth Monarchist leaders were imprisoned by the Crown, and served long sentences in prison. Many of radical leadership would find refuge in Europe, and the government kept them under surveillance too. Some radical elements of the Vennerites continued their efforts against the government in varying amounts of success.

John James (d. 1661)

John James (d. 1661) came from a poor family with little formal education. He did manual labor until his health declined. He became interested in religion, and had some disagreements with the Quakers. He was an itinerate London preacher with millenniumist and Fifth Monarchy leanings.

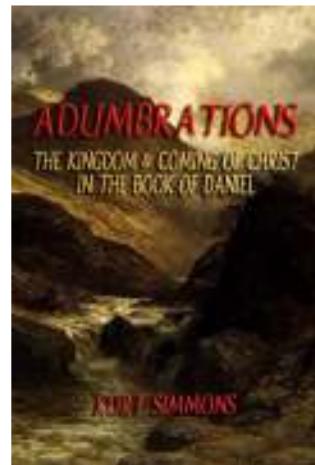
On 19 October 1661, James was arrested in Bulstake Alley (Whitechapel). James was arrested with his congregation on charges of high treason against the new King Charles II. At trial he denied the charges, but did admit that he should have supported Venner and his uprising which he had the chance to do it over. James was convicted for his support of Venner after the fact. On 26 November, he was hanged, disemboweled and quartered at Tyburn. His head may have been placed on a spike outside of his congregation.

There was little evidence to support the Crown's changes against James (d. 1661). He may have been used as an example against other Fifth Monarchy Men, or simply fell victim to the fears of the local authorities. James would not be the last martyr under the reign King Charles II.

Fifth Monarchy Men congregations would continue in England, Wales into the 18th century. The Crown would still keep a eye dissidents. Many who fled England would continue their intrigues and plots against the Crown.

The Fifth Monarch Men were a radical millennium movement of the Interregnum. They voiced many of the concerns for a new society based on religious equality and the rejection of the corruption on Man. They called for legal and land reform changes in the very structure of society. They fell victims to the Establishment, the status quo and their own radical minority message of Venner's Rising (1661).

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