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Have you turned from darkness to light, from the authority (or rule) of Satan unto God to receive the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 26:18)? Have you been given a new heart and a new spirit that causes you to walk in God's ways (Ezekiel 36:26-27, and Acts 11:15-18)? Have you accepted the yoke of the kingdom to submit your life to His rule and reign (Matthew 3:1-2, 6, Romans 6:13, and 21-22)? Have you called upon God for the forgiveness of your sins (Luke 18:13-14)? If so, then God has granted you the privilege of turning to Him to receive eternal life. Acts 11:18 states, "When they heard these things, they...glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

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# The King and His Kingdom

In the Old Testament, what made Israel distinct from all other nations is that it was a theocracy. In other words, it was ruled directly by God (Isaiah 43:15). Later in Israel's history, they wanted to be like the other nations of the world, to be ruled by an earthly king (1 Samuel 8:5-19). So God granted their request and chose for them a king named Saul (1 Samuel 10:24-25). Later, because of Saul's disobedience, God raised up David to be king, a man after His own heart (Acts 13:21-22; and 1 Kings 15:3).

The king was to be the visible representative of the invisible God (Deuteronomy 17:14-20). When the king followed the LORD, he and his kingdom would prosper. When the king failed to follow the LORD, he and his kingdom would go into captivity and ruin (1 Samuel 15:22-23).

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When God chose a king, He would send a prophet to anoint that one with oil. This typified the Holy Spirit coming upon this one to empower and anoint him to rule. At this time, the Spirit of God would come upon him and change his heart to rule in righteousness, for God was with him (1 Samuel 10:1, 6, 7, and 9).

This anointing to rule (or to be king), is where the idea of the Messiah comes from. The word “anointed” in Hebrew is “Mashiac” (Messiah) and translated “Christos” (Christ) in Greek. The Old Testament prophets prophesied that in the future the Messiah (or Anointed One) would come, and the God of heaven would set up a kingdom which would never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44; 7:14, and 27). In the Scriptures, if you notice, Jesus never explained to the Jews what He meant when speaking about the kingdom. It was an Old Testament concept that they were already looking for (Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:1-6, Daniel 2:44, 7:13-14, 18, and 27).

It is impossible to understand the message of Jesus without a basic understanding of the kingdom. The kingdom was the message that Jesus spoke and the only one he instructed his disciples to preach (Mark 1:14-15,

Luke 9:1-2, Acts 28:23-31, Luke 16:16, and Matthew 24:14). This message was also referred to as “salvation” or the offer of “eternal life” (See Hebrews 2:3; Matthew 19:16 cp. Matthew 19:23, Acts 28:23-24, 28, and 30-31). Within the phrase “the kingdom of God” is the idea of a group of people that would be ruled by God. In order to enter God’s kingdom, conditions had to be met. A change of heart was required. This change of heart is what the Bible calls repentance. It was a change of heart toward God; that is, it was a turning away from Satan, sin and its ways, unto God, Christ and His ways. As one turns, God offers (as a gift, through Jesus’ shed blood) the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life (Romans 6:23). This “good news” is referred to as the “gospel of grace” or the preaching of the “Kingdom of God” (See Acts 20:24-25).

The kingdom of God is characterized by grace (Matthew 20:1-16) and has come quietly and secretly in the ministry of Jesus (Matthew 13:33). It will one day in the future come to a glorious and visible consummation (Matthew 13:36-43). Until then, those who belong to His invisible kingdom are those in whose lives the kingdom takes visible form (Acts 26:20). They are the

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