

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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THE KINGDOM OF THE HEAVENS

Those who have learned from the Word of God that God will someday establish His government in the earth cannot logically believe that God is governing the earth and its inhabitants now. These two ideas are contradictory and they mutually exclude each other.

It is the erroneous belief of almost all men that God is now governing this world. This fallacious idea is also held throughout Christendom. In my opinion it is a Satanic lie that slanders the ability of God to rule, govern, and control His creatures, for there is nothing more evident than that God is not governing this earth at the present time.

The belief that God now governs mankind is contradictory to the express declaration of Scripture. Three times it is stated in the first chapter of Romans that God gave up man (1:24,26,28). It is a positive fact that if God is now governing the world, then He is entirely responsible for all that is taking place in the world today. If this is so then men cannot be blamed if they should seek for deliverance from God's present rule over them. It is at this point that Satan's lie works most effectively.

It is the express testimony of the Word of God that He will someday establish His government in the earth. The will of God will yet be done in the earth as it is in heaven. Today, men can do their own will or they can seek to do the will of God. When God governs, His will alone must be done.

God's government of this earth and its inhabitants is the subject of this study. This government is designated by two titles in Scripture. It is called "the kingdom of God." It is called "the kingdom of the heavens." Our study will particularly concern the kingdom of the heavens, and through this approach we will also consider the kingdom of God.

It has now been more than 1900 years since John the Baptist came thundering his startling message over the hills of Judea proclaiming, "**the kingdom of the heavens is at hand**" (Matthew 3:2). When he was put in prison the Lord Jesus Christ took up the same theme and heralded the same message (Matthew 4:17). Thus He placed His stamp of divine approval upon the message and the ministry of the "**man sent from God whose name was John**" (John 1:6).

John the Baptist did not bother to explain what his words meant. His chief message was contained in one sentence that was plain to all who heard it. So far as we know none ever made inquiry as to what he meant by "the kingdom of the heavens," This phrase was clearly understood by those who heard him.

When the Lord Jesus proclaimed this same message, and when He sent forth His disciples to do the same, He took it for granted that they and all Israelites who heard them would know from this phrase what it was that was at hand. He did not take too much for granted. The proclamation of this message was strictly limited "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 10:5, 6), and they knew what it meant. The significance of "the kingdom of the heavens" was crystal clear to all who knew the Old Testament and who hoped for the fulfillment of the promises made in it. This was true of those who heard John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus, or the twelve disciples.

But today, over nineteen centuries later, the meaning of this term is not so clear. A mass of error has been imposed upon this phrase until its meaning has become so obscure that it speaks no message of truth to most readers of the first Gospel. It is employed by ministers in their preaching in such manner that their use of it reveals they have no true conception of its meaning. So-called evangelists habitually urge men to "repent because the kingdom of heaven is at hand." It would seem that the proper answer to such an appeal would be to say that since it has been at hand for 1900 years there is no need for a hasty repentance.

It seems that the average professing Christian believes that some indefinite, ephemeral, intangible thing called "the kingdom of the heavens" began while our Lord was upon earth and that it has been in existence ever since. If this is true, honesty forces us to admit that it has not done much good, and that the world is no better since it came than before its arrival. Furthermore, if it has accomplished so little in nineteen centuries, then the world has little to expect from the influence of the kingdom of the heavens. In view of this it is imperative that we come to some definite conclusion as to whether today we have on earth man's kingdom, Satan's kingdom or heaven's kingdom. I personally do not believe that there is anything on earth today that can rightfully be called "the kingdom of the heavens."

On every hand we find those who say they are doing "kingdom work." Some ministers claim that they are preaching the gospel of the kingdom. Some say that the kingdom is here, others say that it is coming, and others say that it is being extended. However, in relationship to all this talk about "the kingdom," one fact stands out. Few ever seek to get down to reality and give a tangible and adequate definition of the word *kingdom*.

Those who seek to make an exhaustive study of "the kingdom of the heavens" will soon realize that this is the predominant subject in the Word of God - - if the amount of space given to a subject can be taken as a safe guide to its importance. A thousand and one plain facts are stated concerning it, and no definition of "the kingdom of the heavens" is adequate unless it is in harmony with everyone of these facts. Most definitions that have been given by those who have written on this theme do not as a rule harmonize with the revealed facts. We find in Scripture many such statements as "the kingdom of the heavens is like." If the definition we give of the kingdom of the heavens does not fit harmoniously with the statement made, then our definition must be wrong.

Premillennial theology has erroneously taken the position that the kingdom of the heavens in its present form is Christendom, and in its future form it will be the millennium, or the thousand-year reign of Christ. Both of these views are wrong, as there is a multitude of facts concerning the kingdom of the heavens, which will not harmonize with this definition.

Take for example the idea that the kingdom of heaven is the millennium. It is a positive fact that John the Baptist announced the nearness of the kingdom of the heavens, but it is out of reason to say that he was announcing the nearness of the millennium. Neither could it be said that the millennium is like a grain of mustard seed or, that the millennium is like unto leaven which a woman hid in three measures of meal. Yet both of these statements are made concerning the kingdom of the heavens. Thus since both of these statements are true of the kingdom of the heavens, and neither one of them are true of the millennium, only one conclusion is possible- - the millennium is not the kingdom of the heavens.

No one sentence definition of the kingdom of the heavens is possible, and I do not plan to formulate one. The definition must be a body of truth, and this body of truth must harmonize with and illuminate every positive fact that is revealed concerning it. This body of truth is the goal of our study.

The Terms Used

The phrase "the kingdom of the heavens" is found only in the Gospel of Matthew where it occurs, thirty-four times. This does not mean that Matthew is the only writer who reveals truth concerning it. This phrase in the Greek is always the same in every occurrence. The word *heavens* is always plural. The phrase is composed simply of two definite articles and two nouns. We must know from Scripture the meaning of these two nouns before we can hope to gain any true understanding of "the kingdom of the heavens."

First of all let us consider the term "the heavens." This at once tells us that the kingdom we are considering is not man's kingdom, it is not Satan's kingdom, it is the heaven's kingdom. This is a truth that must be fully recognized and firmly held. In regard to the term "the heavens," I have the firm conviction that we know "nothing yet as we ought to know it" (I Cor. 8:2).

It has been with much profit over a period of several years that I have sought to carefully consider and meditate upon every passage in the Old and New Testaments wherein the Hebrew and Greek words translated "heaven" and "heavens" occur. The first occurrence is in Genesis 1:1 where we are told that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Since this is the beginning of all revelation concerning "the heavens," the one logical question for a truth seeker to ask is, "What was it that God created when in the beginning He created the heavens." The idea so prevalent that he created a glorious place where good people could go when they die is so foolish that merely to state it is sufficient to show its absurdity. This is nothing more than a refinement of the Indian's idea of a "happy hunting ground" and it has no basis in Scripture.

My own studies in the word *heavens* has brought a definite conviction in regard to one great fact. When this Hebrew word appears it is always the symbol of two things, setting forth two distinct ideas or thoughts. These two ideas or thoughts are closely related, they are inseparable, yet they are clearly distinguished. The word "heavens" in Genesis 1:1 stands for a place and for the beings that inhabit that place. Thus, in the beginning when God created "the heavens," He created two distinct things, a place and the beings that inhabit it. And it is only logical for us to believe that the beings are more important than the place.

We know very little about these beings. When they appear away from heaven they are called angels, or, more properly, messengers. And if any should object to this on the ground that the word "earth" in Genesis 1:1 does not include its inhabitants, I would remind them that the Hebrew word for "heavens" is a dual word while "earth" is not.

The context of a passage in which the word "heavens" occurs will often throw the meaning toward

either the place or the beings, which inhabit the place. For example in Daniel 4:26 we read of the truth that Nebuchadnezzar had to learn "that the heavens do rule." Here the emphasis is most certainly on the beings that inhabit the place rather than on the place. Thus it is beings that rule, not a place that rules, even though these beings are always related to that place.

Therefore, in Matthew when we read of "the kingdom of the heavens" we are reading of a kingdom, which is of those beings and of that place which God created in the beginning. These beings do the will of God. He is the ruler of those who populate the heavens. When God's will is done upon the earth as it is done in heaven, then the kingdom of the heavens will be a reality.

The other word that needs to be carefully considered is *kingdom*. This is the **Greek word *basileia***, and even though it is usually translated "kingdom," it is my conviction that this is a wholly inadequate and unsatisfactory rendering. It does not represent, and furthermore it misrepresents the word *basileia*. Our word *kingdom* is a concrete word while the Greek word *basileia* is properly an abstract word. Our word *kingdom* denotes the "dom" or dominion of a king, while in the phrase "the kingdom of the heavens" we have the "dom" or dominion of the heavens, and not of a king. The English word *kingdom* means a state or monarchy, the head of which is a king. In harmony with this it is entirely true that there can be no kingdom apart from a king. But the plainest fact in the phrase "the kingdom of the heavens" is that it is not the kingdom of a king, it is the kingdom of the heavens. As long as there is that which is called "the heavens," there can be a kingdom of the heavens at any moment God wills it to be so. In fact the word kingdom does not harmonize with the word heavens, any more than if one would say "king of the republic." The words *king* and *republic* do not go together.

However, while the word *kingdom* does not express enough truth to fully represent the Greek word *basileia*, I do not suggest that it be abandoned and another word be adopted. But I do suggest that we go to the Word of God and seek to find the full meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words translated "kingdom," and then attach these meanings to the word *kingdom*.

Kingdom in the Old Testament

In **Hebrews 1:8** we read:

But unto the Son He Saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.

The word translated "kingdom" in this passage is *basileia*.

In **Psalms 45:6** we read:

Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter.

The word translated "kingdom" in this passage is the **Hebrew word *malkuth*** (pronounced mal-ROOTH).

In view of this we can rest assured of this fact that the Holy Spirit has used these two words interchangeably. They are identical in value in Scripture. Therefore, the meaning of the Greek word can best be obtained from the use of *malkuth* in the Old Testament. A review of certain pertinent passages will help greatly to comprehend the fulness of meaning of this word.

In **I Samuel 20:31** Saul declared to his son Jonathan that as long as David was alive he, Jonathan, would "not be established, nor thy kingdom." Saul did not mean that Israel's land, flag, country, etc., would not be established as long as David lived, but that Jonathan's rule over Israel would never become a reality. **Rule** is the basic idea in the Hebrew word *malkuth*.

In I Kings 2:12 we read that Solomon sat upon the throne of his father David and that "his kingdom was established greatly." This means Solomon's government. The throne, land, capital or people did not belong to Solomon. But the government was his, God had given it to him, and he was responsible to God for it. The idea of **government** is also fundamental in the word *malkuth*.

I Chronicles 12:23 tells of certain men who joined David in Hebron "to turn the kingdom of Saul to him." It is evident that the rule or government, which had once been Saul's was turned over to David.

In I Chronicles 14:2 we read that David understood that God had confirmed him as king (meaning ruler or governor) over Israel and that his kingdom (government) was exalted for the sake of Israel. At this point it is interesting to note that the Scriptures never speak of the kingdom (*malkuth*) of Israel or of Judah. Israel had no kingdom, and neither had Judah. Israel was a nation of people, not a kingdom. We do read of the kingdom of Persia and of Grecia (Daniel 10:13 and 11:2) for these nations did rule or govern other nations. This helps us to better understand the meaning of the word *malkuth* in the Old Testament.

In I Chronicles 26:31 *malkuth* is translated "reign." This is expressive, for a reign is a government. We are inclined to think that *reign* has to do with a man sitting upon a throne. The sooner we discard these childish ideas the easier it will be for us to comprehend the truth. See also II Chronicles 3:2; 15:19; and 16:1, where *malkuth* is also translated "reign." In Esther 1:19 "royal" twice. In Esther 1:20 "empire." Thus we see that the translators have used *empire, kingdom, realm, reign, and royal* in the hope of expressing some of the truth in the word *malkuth*. This word and its companion word *basileia* could be translated **sovereignty, rule, dominion, government, authority, control or jurisdiction, for these are the ideas to be found in them.** These are all abstract ideas, and the concrete is a derived meaning, which is not basic in these words. In Acts 1:6 when the disciples asked the Lord if He would "at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel," it is most evident that they meant the rule or government. At the time they asked this question Israel was under the rule or government of Rome.

In view of all these facts it becomes plain that those who heard John and the Lord Jesus concerning "the kingdom of the heavens" would understand that they meant the rule or government of that place and those beings, which are designated in Scripture as "the heavens." In fact, this is the very purpose for which the heavens were created. That "the heavens do rule," was the lesson Nebuchadnezzar had to learn. See Daniel 4:26. "The heavens have dominion," would be a better translation of the passage.

When God gave up mankind, as we have already seen is declared three times in the first chapter of Romans, the heavens ceased to exercise any dominion over the inhabitants of the earth, but it was not God's purpose that this should continue forever. The heavens will again rule-first over Israel, then over all mankind. When God begins the work of establishing His government in the earth that will mark a new beginning of the kingdom (government) of the heavens.

The careful student of the Old and New Testament will know that when God sets His government in the earth it will begin with the people called the Jews or Israel. The heavens will rule over Israel first, but only so that God's beneficent government might extend to the whole world. "The Lord has prepared His throne (the seat of His government) in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all (His government has dominion over all)" is the testimony of Psalm 103:19. Nevertheless, it is "to the Jew first." The twentieth chapter of Ezekiel gives such important testimony in this connection that we will examine it in some detail. '

An Examination of Ezekiel 20

The first thirty-two verses of this chapter deal with five great rebellions in Israel. The first rebellion is set forth in verses five to nine. This took place in the land of Egypt when they did not hearken to Him in regard to completely abandoning all Egyptian abominations and idolatry. Because of this God said He would pour out His fury upon them to accomplish His anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt. But another matter entered into this, namely, the sake of His name that it should not be polluted among the Egyptians before whom He had revealed Himself to Israel. Therefore, instead of pouring out His fury upon them, He wrought for His Name's sake and brought them out of the land of Egypt.

The second great rebellion of Israel is set forth in verses ten to seventeen. This took place in the wilderness after He had graciously brought them forth out of the land of Egypt. He gave them statutes, showed them His judgments and gave them His sabbaths as a sign between Him and them. But the house of Israel rebelled against Him in the wilderness. They despised His judgments, refused to walk in His statutes, and polluted His sabbaths. Again He said He would pour out His fury upon them to consume them. But instead of dealing with them in wrath, He dealt with them in grace and worked mightily among them for His name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the Gentiles, in whose sight He had brought them out. The glory of His name was more important than that their iniquities should be punished. Nevertheless, though He did not destroy them in the wilderness, He did not permit that generation to go into the land of Canaan.

The third great rebellion of Israel is set forth in verses eighteen to twenty-six. This was the rebellion on the borders of Canaan of the new generation that arose during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. God reminded this new company of the failure of their fathers and called upon them to walk in His statutes, keep His judgments and hallow His sabbaths. But they turned against Him. Again He declared that He would pour out His fury upon them and accomplish His anger against them. However, instead of doing this, He withdrew His hand, wrought for His name's sake that it should not be polluted in the sight of the Gentiles, in whose sight He had brought them forth. So He brought them into the land of Canaan and established them there.

The fourth great rebellion is recorded in verses twenty-seven to twenty-nine. It was the failure of the new generation that arose after God had brought them into the land of Canaan. However, God had already fulfilled His word to them in bringing them into the land, so He rebuked their idolatry and left them to their own devices. Their failure in the time of the Judges was well known to every Israelite.

The fifth and greatest rebellion is set forth in verses thirty to thirty-two. It was the apostasy in Ezekiel's own day. They were polluted after the manner of their fathers before them. They committed whoredoms after their abominations. Israel was at that very moment being punished for her sins, and the captivity and dispersion of the land was at hand. However God issued a stern warning. They thought that if they were dispersed they would merge with and become like other nations, worshipping their heathen gods and losing their own identity. God declares that this shall not be.

And that which cometh into your mind shall not be at all, that ye say, We will be as the heathen (Gentiles), as the families of the countries to serve wood and stone. Ezekiel 20:32.

The literal fulfillment of this is seen in all their subsequent history. They have never become like other nations. . All this serves as the introduction to one of the most marvelous prophecies in the Old Testament. We will consider this portion (**Ezekiel 20:33-44**) in detail.

As I live saith the Lord God. The complete fulfillment of this prophecy is as sure as the existence of God.

Surely with a mighty hand. The hand is the symbol of skill or dexterity. The consummate skill of God will be openly brought into action to fulfill this prophecy, and this divine skill will be manifested in every detail to all who witness the fulfillment.

And with a stretched out arm. The arm is the symbol of power or strength, and the stretched out arm is the symbol of power or strength in action. We can rest assured that the fulfillment of this prophecy will be brought about by divine power in manifestation.

And with fury poured out. This outpoured indignation is related to all things or beings that would hinder in the least the fulfillment of this prediction. Any man, any nation, any obstacle that hinders in the least will be ruthlessly swept aside by divine fury. God will not tolerate the least opposition. This is to be a far greater deliverance than Israel experienced when she came out of the land of Egypt. No man can safely lift a finger against it. If he does, divine fury will be poured out upon him.

Will I rule over you. This declares emphatically what it is that God is going to do by divine skill, power, and outpoured fury. He is going to govern Israel. The word for ***rule*** here is ***malak*** (pronounced maw-LAK) and it is the primary root from which the word *malkuth* comes. It is usually translated "king," but here it denotes an action, and it means to govern, that is, to fully direct and control the actions or conduct. It indicates here that God will direct, control, and be responsible for every detail in the life of Israel.

The word *rule* fails to express the fullness of the truth in the word *malak*. A parent may rule a child, dominating its every act and yet fail to govern it. Rule suggests arbitrary authority, commandments and punishment for transgression or failure, while *govern* goes much further. To govern implies direction, instruction, influence, control and restraint. Thus "to govern" means much more than "to rule." God has declared that He will govern Israel. One who governs must assume full responsibility. God has never yet governed Israel. This prophecy has never been fulfilled. It is not in the process of being fulfilled now. At this present time an attempt is being made to establish an Israelitish government in Palestine. To this God's name is being attached and the bold claim is made that it is His work. This is another slander against His name.

And I will bring you out from the people. The word *people* here is plural and should read *peoples*. It has the same meaning as when we say "the French people," or "the peoples of Europe." It is synonymous with *nation*, although it has a different force. Lincoln used these words carefully when he said, "this *nation*, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom-and that government of the *people*, by the *people*, and for the *people*, shall not perish from the earth." The first step when God begins to govern Israel will be to bring Israel out from among all other peoples. This does not mean physical separation.

And I will gather you out of the countries wherein ye were scattered. This does mean physical separation, and it is not the same as the previous statement. The previous statement implies an act of restoration by means of which they are separated from those with whom they are now united by common character and culture. They will no longer be German Jews, Russian Jews or Sephardic Jews. This is what is meant by being brought "out from the peoples." God is going to stamp a new character upon them, which will separate them and restore them to their place as God's unique people. Then they will be brought out of the countries where they are now scattered. Two steps are set forth here in proper order.

With a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm, and with fury poured out. The same divine skill, power, and outpoured indignation is to be manifested in this exodus as is in His government over them. This is proof that the present return of some Jews to Palestine is not the fulfillment of this prophecy. God will begin His government over them first in the very places where they are now scattered. He will place His government (kingdom) within them, before He places them under His

government in their ancient land. God will assume control and direction over their lives first. Then He will instruct them to go back.

And I will bring you into the wilderness of the people, and there will I plead with you face to face. People is plural in this passage also, and should read peoples. When we consider the word wilderness in its typical significance in relation to Israel we find that it has a twofold meaning. It speaks of complete separation from other nations, and of being brought to a place of complete dependence upon God. See Exodus 5:1, 8:25-27, and 15:22 for pertinent examples of this. Israel in the wilderness was cut off from other nations and dependent upon God alone. This is the place, both physical and spiritual, to which He is going to bring them, and there will He plead with them face to face. To "plead" means to bring every argument, to marshal every fact, to reveal every truth in support of a claim or position. (see Micah 6:2). To do this face to face means that it is to be done directly and personally, not through signs, events, or symbols. Some are inclined to feel that this would demand the personal presence (parousia) of Christ upon earth, but the next statement shows this to be a mistake. If the parousia takes place first there will be none left to plead with (see **II Thessalonians 1:7-8**).

Like as I pleaded with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so will I plead with you saith the Lord God. This is in all probability a reference to God's marvelous recitals recorded in the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy. It was through these great declarations that they were brought under the covenant of Sinai. This covenant was broken.

And I will cause you to pass under the rod. This, I believe, has a twofold meaning. It sets forth the oriental method by which sheep were counted, recognized and accepted as they passed under the shepherd's rod. All that passed under the rod were his. Those injured or torn were not turned away. They were ministered to by the shepherd according to their need. But the rod is also the ceremonial emblem of dominion or government. To be under one's rod is to be under his rule or government. Therefore, this also means that Israel is to be brought under and into the government of God when it is established upon this earth. In fact, Israel will be the first to "pass under the rod." All other nations must follow in due time and order or else be eliminated from God's family of nations.

And I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. Israel's history is in a manner to repeat itself. They were brought forth from the bondage of Egypt, God plead with them in the wilderness and brought them under the bond of the covenant at Sinai. Their future history is an exodus from among the nations, He will plead with them in the wilderness and He will bring them into the bond of the covenant. The "bond" means the binding obligation of the covenant. A full statement concerning this is found in **Jeremiah 31:31-34** - - **Behold, the days come, saith the Lord that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt: which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord. But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord. I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know Me. from the least of them unto the greatest of them saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.**

And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against Me. Those who set themselves against God's rule, those who refuse to submit and to be conformed to His government, those who refuse or fail to return to their ancient country when His Spirit tells them to do so, those who determine to remain in the country where they sojourn, all these will be classed as rebels and purged from among the people of Israel.

I will bring them (those who rebel) forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel:

The rebels in Israel who refuse to leave the countries of their sojourn will be expelled by divine force, but they will not be permitted to enter the land of Israel. Under God's government no Israelite can make his home outside of the land of Palestine. None can have citizenship outside of Israel.

And ye shall know that I am the Lord. This ties together this marvelous prophecy. Israel will know when God says, "Let there be light." This is repeated in verses 42 and 44.

Verse **thirty-nine of Ezekiel 20** is divine irony and it is a parenthetical setting forth of the words God spoke to the elders of Israel through Ezekiel when they came to inquire of the Lord. A more literal rendering of this verse would be:

Go then, serve every man his manufactured gods; Yet afterwards you will surely hearken unto Me, and My holy name you shall profane no more with your gifts and your manufactured gods.

The balance of the chapter should be read carefully as it repeats the truth and adds some details.

For in mine holy mountain, in the mountain of the height of Israel all of them in the land serve me: there will I accept them and there will I require your offerings and the first fruits of your oblations, with all your holy things. I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people (peoples) and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you before the heathen.

And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall bring you into the land of Israel, into the country for the which I lifted up mine hands to give it to your fathers.

And there shall ye remember your ways and all your doings wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed. And ye shall know that I am the Lord when I have wrought with you for My name's sake not according to your wicked ways, nor according to your corrupt doings, O ye house of Israel. saith the Lord God. Ezekiel 20:40-44.

It was this rule, these conditions, this divine government, the fulfillment of this prophecy that came to every Israelite's mind when John the Baptist announced that the kingdom (government) of the heavens was at hand. Every man in Israel knew this chapter as well as we know the twenty-third Psalm. The conditions, which this prophecy set forth were those to prevail under the rule of the heavens. If they came under this divine government, they could expect to come under some of the most marvelous blessings that had ever been poured out upon human beings. If they failed to submit, if they rebelled, they would be purged from Israel and cut off from every promise in the Old Testament. With these facts before us, we are now ready to consider the kingdom of heaven in the New Testament.

The Call to Repentance

The announcement of John the Baptist that the kingdom of the heavens is at hand was prefaced by the one-word call to repent. This was all his hearers needed to do, it was all they could do in view of the fact that the heavens were to begin their beneficent rule. They could not help to bring it in, they could not stop it from coming in. They could put nothing to it, nor take nothing from it. All they could do was to repent.

The **Greek word translated repent** here is *metanoeo*. The dictionary meaning of the word *repent* is "to feel penitence, contrition, or regret for what one has done or omitted to do." In view of this, all

careful students of the Bible will agree with Dr. A. T. Robertson's quotation of Dr. John A. Broadus that the translation of *metanoeo* by "repent" is the worst translation in the New Testament. There is no English word that reproduces exactly the meaning and nuances of the Greek. Nevertheless, this does not hinder us from understanding and entering into the true meaning of this Greek word.

The original meaning of Hebrew word for repent (*nacham*) is "to draw a deep breath" or more properly to sigh. A sigh is understood to be the physical mode of giving expression to a deep feeling of either relaxation or the desire to relax. This points us to the true meaning of both the Hebrew and Greek words. They mean **submission, yieldedness, capitulation, surrender, passivity, or nonresistance.**

In John the Baptist's message the heavens were to take over the government of the world and all men were called upon to submit. Any resistance would be summarily dealt with. Any resistance movement would be crushed. This is the first declaration concerning the kingdom of the heavens and a very proper one. All are to become submissive.

Whose fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Matthew 3:12.

By means of a water ceremony, John as a man sent from God, and acting upon full authority from God, identified men with the repentant (submissive) ones in Israel. When the Lord appeared He sought also by the same ceremony to be identified with the submissive ones in Israel. John objected to this, but the Lord declared that it was fitting for them to fulfill all righteousness. Matthew 3:13-15.

The Principles of Heaven's Rule

The divine principles or laws that are to characterize the government of the heavens upon the earth were enunciated long before in the Old Testament. From the earliest days of His ministry, the Lord Jesus began to reiterate, clarify, and confirm these divine principles that would become operative the moment the heavens began their rule. Three of these great principles are in His conversation with Satan at the time of the temptation as recorded in Matthew 4.

All three of these are preceded by the declaration "It is written." This has the force of "It is already written."

The first is that, "**man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God**" (Matthew 4:4). Today, this is only good advice, and the wise will follow its counsel. But if men decide to ignore it, and the overwhelming majority do, they will probably live as long, as well, and be as healthy and prosperous as those who seek a daily portion of His Word. But from the moment that heaven's rule is established upon the earth this principle will become increasingly in force until no man can live, be healthy, or survive on material food alone. The Word of God can now be ignored, but under God's government no one will dare to ignore it. It contains essential spiritual vitamins that men need, and they will not be able to live apart from it. Furthermore, there can be no selected portions, no cafeteria methods of handling the Word when God rules over men. Men can live only by every word that has issued forth from the mouth of God. These words originally stated in Deuteronomy 8:3 were not spoken in vain. The world will yet see them in full force, operating as surely as the law of gravitation operates today.

The second great principle which He declares is already written is "**Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.**" Matthew 4:7. Under God's government it will be a serious matter indeed to place God on trial. Men do it continually today. Some preachers urge them to do it. But a day is coming when they will run the risk of outpoured fury if they try to put God on trial.

The third great principle is stated in Matthew 4:10 "**Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve.**" The things which men worship today are uncountable. The things they serve are even more numerous. Even ministers serve churches and congregations, and in many cases, this is what they serve, not God. When the heavens govern the earth all worship and service, which is not centered in God will be high treason against the established government. And no policemen will be needed to ferret out such traitors. No courts will be needed to try them and fix a penalty. These principles will operate within men and all who violate them will feel the effect in their own bodies.

Other principles of God's government, the blessings that come to men under it, are set forth in Matthew, chapters five to seven. In these chapters He tells the people what they can expect when the heavens begin their government of the earth. The heavens will govern the individual lives of these who are poor in spirit (Matthew 5:3). Since "the way of man is not in himself," since "it is not in man to direct his steps," it is plain to all what a blessing this will be (Jeremiah 10:23). Those who mourn will be comforted when the heavens govern (Matthew 5:4). The earth will be allotted to the meek (5:5). This is quite different today. Under man's government, meekness will get none a square foot of the earth. Those who hunger for righteousness will have that hunger satisfied when God governs the earth (5:6); the merciful will obtain mercy (5:7); the pure in heart will discern God (5:8); the peacemakers will be called the sons of God (5:9); and those who are persecuted on account of righteousness will enjoy special guidance of the heavens (5:10).

When God governs the earth, anyone who is angry with his brother without cause shall be in danger of the judgment. Today men are almost habitually angry with one another, and as a rule there is no reason for it. Under the dominion of the heavens such conduct will bring men in danger of the judgment. The exact meaning of this will be plain to all when God sets up His government. Furthermore, anyone who says to his brother "Raca," will be in danger of the council. "Raca" seems to be simply a word hurled in contempt. It probably means nothing in itself, but the one who uses it has attached a contemptuous meaning to it. What "the council" is will also be made plain in that day. Most serious offence of all is the one who says "You fool." This is equivalent to the epithet "Stupid." We can call men stupid today, and oftentimes be speaking the truth. Even if we are mistaken, it will not bring us into danger of the "Gehenna of fire." When the heavens govern the earth none will dare to call another stupid. This government begins by God enlightening every man on earth in regard to sin, righteousness and judgment, so there will be no stupid ones. Just what the "Gehenna of fire" is, will also be crystal clear in that day.

In former times the physical act of adultery was forbidden by the law. Under the rule of the heavens any man who looks upon a woman to lust after her will stand before God as one who has committed adultery already in his heart (Matthew 5:27-28). "But," someone will ask, "is not this true today?" And my answer is "Most certainly!" But men do this today with impunity and nothing happens. Under God's government a divine principle will be in operation that will cause men to sicken and perhaps to die if they are guilty of this sin.

All governments today feel it is their duty to assume some control over marriages and divorces. We recognize the need of this. When God sets up His government on the earth He will impose upon men His own marriage and divorce laws. See Matthew 5:31, 32.

Since none who work deceit shall remain under God's economy, and those who tell lies shall not tarry in His sight (Psalm 101:7), He wants men to give their word and others to take their word in harmony with this great principle. Their communications, therefore, are to be "Yes" and "No," and they are forbidden to go beyond this in affirming the truth of their statements. God will punish the liar, and He will care for any who have been hurt from believing a lie.

Much more could be said along this line, but enough has been given to help the reader search the Gospel of Matthew anew for light concerning those principles and conditions that will prevail when the heavens govern the earth.

The Kingdom of God

At this point in our studies we will need to consider the relationship of the kingdom of the heavens to the kingdom of God. It is a positive fact that that which Matthew calls "the kingdom of the heavens" is called by Mark and Luke "the kingdom of God." I believe that the kingdom of the heavens is the kingdom of God, even though it is not so in its entirety. In other words, heaven's government or rule is God's government or rule, even though God rules in some spheres where the heavens do not. California is most certainly the United States even though it is not the whole of it. A man standing in California can say, "This is the United States," and none will dispute him. Even so when the rule of the heavens is a reality upon the earth, men can truthfully say, "This is the rule of God." Since God rules the heavens and the heavens rule the earth, the rule of the heavens over the earth can be called the rule of God. However, it should be noted that God rules over some beings who are higher than the heavens, and who are not under heaven's rule.

This truth was well known in the Old Testament. In Daniel 4:17 the prophet says, "that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men." Again in Daniel 4:25 he says to Nebuchadnezzar, "till thou know that the most high ruleth in the kingdom of men." But in verse 26 he says to this same Nebuchadnezzar, "after that thou shalt have known that the heavens do rule." Thus we see an easy change from "the most high" to "the heavens," and there is no contradiction. The most High ruled the heavens and they have dominion over the earth.

When comparisons are made between Matthew and Mark and Luke the identity of heaven's kingdom with God's kingdom becomes quite clear. In **Matthew 4:12-17** we read: Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison He departed into Galilee

From that time Jesus began to preach and say. **Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**

Then in **Mark 1:14-15** we read:

Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand: Repent ye and believe the gospel.

In **Matthew 13:31** we read, "the kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed," while in **Mark 4:30-31**, we find "Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God?" . . . it is like a grain of mustard seed."

In **Matthew 13:33** we read "the kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven," but in **Luke 13:20-21** we read, "Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal"

It is always proper to call the kingdom of the heavens by its greater title, the kingdom of God. We could substitute it in every occurrence in Matthew and do no harm to the truth as long as we kept in mind that it is limited to God's rule over the earth, and that it does not include His rule over the heavens. We must remember that while the heavens will rule the earth, the heavens do not rule the heavens. God rules the heavens, and the heavens are a part of the kingdom of God.

That the kingdom of the heavens is the rule of God over the earth is an important truth, because some things are spoken of as God's rule over the earth that are vital to any proper understanding of the kingdom of the heavens. One of these vital truths is found in Mark 4:26-29. .

And He said. So is the kingdom of God. as if a man should cast seed into the ground: And should sleep, and rise night and *day*, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself: first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth. immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

Here our Lord presented a likeness of the kingdom or government of God. It is plain that this has nothing to do with God's rule over those beings called "the sons of God," neither does it refer to God's rule over the heavens. This is dealing with God's kingdom or government in the earth, that which Matthew calls "the kingdom of the heavens." This parable reveals how God's kingdom is to come over Israel and then over the whole earth. It is as if a man should cast seed in the ground and leave it there. There is nothing more that needs to be done for seed once it is placed in the earth.

Numerous attempts have been made by expositors to rewrite the parable. Some have treated it as if it said, "So is the Lord Jesus as a man who casts seed into the ground." Others have read it as if it said "So are the ministers of Christ as men who cast seed, etc." But this passage was never given as a picture of Christ, nor of the servants of Christ, nor of the grace of God in the human heart. It is a likeness of the kingdom (government) of God in this earth. It deals specifically with how that government will begin and how it will progress and finally come to its fruition. It will not come suddenly or dramatically. It will be like a seed which when it has been placed in the ground is not visible to the human eye. Nevertheless, it is there and it is exerting a force and an energy that no man can comprehend. So is the kingdom of God. The stages of its development are also clearly set forth. First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear, then the harvest. These are not clearly defined changes. None can say at what precise moment one stage ends and another begins. For just as the last note in an octave is the beginning of the next, even so the blade stage in grain merges with the next. God's government will begin to develop the moment it is placed within the earth. It will operate at first through a secret invisible energy, even as seed. Later it will be so manifest that none can deny its presence and outworkings. This is an important truth that needs to be carefully learned, fully acknowledged and firmly held.

Another important truth concerning the kingdom of God is found in **Luke 17:20-21**.

And when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said. The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! For, behold the kingdom of God is within you.

There can be no doubt but that these Pharisees questioned Him concerning that earthly aspect of the kingdom of God which is called in Matthew the kingdom of the heavens, that is, God's government or rule over the earth. They did not ask concerning the date, but they inquired concerning the visible signs and the tangible proof that God's rule of the earth was a reality. The Lord's answer to this question was simple and plain. God's rule over the earth will not come with observation, that is, men standing by and scrutinizing its pomp and display, watching the grand spectacle of its arrival. Neither will men be able to point the finger and say, "Here it is" or "there it is." For when it comes, it will have no bounds. It will cover the whole world instantly. Like a seed that is planted in the earth, so will God's rule be placed in the earth. This fact does not deny the truth that its outgrowth will be seen first in Israel.

This was followed by our Lord making a further statement, which has long been the subject of controversy. He declared, "**The kingdom of God is within you.**" "How could Christ say to the self-righteous, Christ - - rejecting Pharisees, that the kingdom of God was within them?" is a question often asked. Many solve this problem by translating *entos* by "in the midst" or "among". I have taught this myself but can no longer hold it. The word *entos* certainly means inside as is shown by its only other occurrence, (Matthew 23:26) where it speaks of the **inside** of the cup in contrast with the outside.

This difficulty no longer exists when we recognize that the kingdom of God is the government of God. His government is utterly unlike the governments of this world. All human governments are outside of men and are effective only as men yield to their sway. No human law can be passed that will cause a man to sicken and die if he breaks it. God's government will be inside of men. To bless those who yield to it, and to eliminate those who rebel against it. This statement does-not locate the kingdom of God. It simply sets forth one aspect of its character.

I have seen airplanes take off, fly and land without a pilot. They were governed by what is generally called remote control. If in such flights, an instrument within the plane responds promptly and truly, all will be well with the plane. But if it fails to function, a crash is inevitable.

Even so it is with the kingdom of God. Something of God is going to be placed within every man. Something of His light, truth, and knowledge. See John 16:8-11. This truth in man must respond to the truth in God. If man responds, all will be well with him. If not, a crash will be the result. For under God's government is the time when men shall hear a voice behind them saying, "this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left." See Isaiah 30:21.

To Be Continued – Vol. XII, No. 3

THIS IS THAT WHICH- Acts 2:16

Most Bible students will recognize at once the source of the peculiar title to this article. It comes from **Acts 2:16** where Peter declared of the events that had taken place in the short space of three hours on the day of Pentecost:

But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.

On the basis of this statement there are many who believe that the events, which preceded this declaration fulfilled the prophecy recorded in **Joel 2:28-32** and repeated by Peter in **Acts 2:17-21**. In harmony with this interpretation it is also reasoned that "the last days" began on the day of Pentecost and that they are already past or have been continuing for the past 1900 years.

That the events which happened between six and nine o'clock on the day of Pentecost fulfilled Joel's prophecy is an idea which is unreasonable, illogical, unbelievable and impossible. It could have been the beginning of its fulfillment, or it could possibly have been the first installment of its fulfillment, but that it was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy is unreasonable and impossible.

According to the inspired record all that had taken place in those few hours (at **Pentecost**) was,

- (1) there was a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind,
- (2) there appeared cloven tongues like as of fire,
- (3) one hundred and twenty devout believers were filled with the Holy Spirit, and
- (4) they began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

In **Joel's prophecy** nine distinct and unusual things were predicted:

- (1) God is to pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh,
- (2) Israel's sons and daughters are to prophesy,
- (3) their young men are to see visions,
- (4) their old men are to dream dreams,
- (5) God is to pour out of His Spirit upon His servants and His handmaidens,
- (6) these servants and handmaidens shall prophesy,
- (7) God will show signs in the earth beneath, "blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke,"
- (8) the sun is to be turned into darkness, and
- (9) the moon is to be turned into blood.

When we face these facts it is evident that if the four things that took place on the day of Pentecost fulfilled the nine things predicted in the prophecy of Joel, then it is utterly ridiculous for us to ever expect the literal fulfillment of any prophecy in the Word of God. Furthermore, we are forced to believe that God says one thing and means another that His words do not reveal His thoughts, and we must always look for weak fulfillments of majestic prophecies, fulfillments that are entirely different from what God has said.

The only possible resemblance between Joel's prophecy and the events that took place on Pentecost was that Joel said God would pour out of His Spirit upon ALL flesh, and at Pentecost the Spirit was poured out upon a hundred and twenty devout believers.

If the events of Pentecost fulfilled Joel's prophecy, it reminds me of a highly advertised fireworks display, which a friend told me he saw several years ago. The advertisement promised that they would see the burning of Rome, Niagara Falls, the battle of Iwo Jima, and the end of the world, all vividly portrayed in fireworks. But a light rain had fallen that afternoon and when the hour came to witness the fulfillment of these spectacles, Rome only sparkled, Niagara Falls was a mere trickle, several marines in the audience laughed at the battle of Iwo Jima, and no matter how many times they applied the torch the stubborn world refused to come to an end.

It would not be hard to imagine the feeling of the believers at Pentecost if they had expected that day that Joel's majestic prophecy was to be fulfilled. Not discounting in the least the glorious nature of the things that did occur, they could have felt nothing but disappointment if Peter had stood up at the end of three hours and said, "We have this morning seen the fulfillment of Joel's majestic prophecy."

If we accept the idea that Pentecost fulfilled Joel's prophecy, then we must also take the position that God says He will do one thing, but does something entirely different, which we must accept as the fulfillment of His word. I, for one, do not believe this. I am willing at all times to consider the probable so far as matters of truth are concerned, but I refuse to consider the impossible and ridiculous. That Pentecost fulfilled Joel's prophecy is both impossible and ridiculous. Those who believe this have closed their minds to every fact.

The idea that Joel's prophecy was fulfilled at Pentecost is characteristic of that school of thought which held that prophecies of the second coming of Christ were fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem, in the descent of the Spirit of Pentecost, or in the death of a believer. But it is not held by those who believe in the literal and actual fulfillments to God's literal prophecies.

Concerning this, Dr. Arno C. Gaebelin has said: In the next place we notice the language Peter uses in quoting Joel: "This is that which was spoken through the prophet Joel"; careless and superficial expositors have often stated that Peter said that all this happened in fulfillment of what was spoken by Joel. He did not use the word fulfilled at all. Had he spoken of a fulfillment then of Joel's prophecy, he would have uttered something that was not true, for the great prophecy of Joel was *not* fulfilled on that day. Nor has this prophecy been fulfilled since Pentecost, nor will it be fulfilled during the present gospel age. *The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 52, 53.

The true meaning of Peter's declaration is not hard to discover. His language is simple, and the facts in the case are plain. The assembled multitude at Pentecost were Israelites and were addressed as such (Acts 2:22). Every devout Israelite knew the prophecy of Joel and hoped for its fulfillment. On the day of Pentecost certain things occurred which were of the same nature and order of the things predicted by Joel. But when the very people who hoped for the fulfillment of Joel's predictions, saw these things they did not recognize them. Joel predicted a great work of the Spirit, and before their eyes they saw a great work of the Spirit, but tried to pass it off by saying "These men are drunk." Acts 2:13.

. Peter's first statement is based upon this charge. "We are not drunk, as you suppose," was his flat denial. "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." If they failed to recognize a work of the Spirit here, they would certainly fail to recognize it when Joel's prophecy was fulfilled. If when the Spirit was poured out on a hundred and twenty they said, "These men are full of new wine," then when the Spirit was poured out upon all flesh they would say, "The whole world is drunk."

The phrase, "this is that which" is not in common use today except in severely formal writing. We would say, "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel." In fact, the *Revised Standard*, *Goodspeed*, *Diaglott*, *Moffatt*, and most English versions render it this way. This may not seem to be of any importance, but I feel it may help us to better understand Peter's statement. Consider the following illustration.

Several years ago I wished to buy a dozen of a certain odd type of screw needed in connection with some work we were doing. War-time shortages were still upon us and I went to several places trying to find them. I did not have a sample, and had some difficulty making it plain just what I wanted. At last one clerk turned and went to the stock room and came back with one screw which he held out to me saying, "is this what you want?" "Yes, that is exactly what I want," I replied with a note of joy in my voice. "How many?" he asked. "A dozen," I replied. "Sorry," he said, "this one is all we have." It was what I wanted, but I left the store empty handed. .

Now, while the screw was what (or, that which) I wanted, it did not fill my desire as one screw would have done me no good. Even so, Pentecost was what (that which) Joel spoke about, but it did not fulfill his prophecy. Furthermore, if I had not recognized the one screw as being what I wanted, I would not have recognized it if he held out twelve or a hundred. Even so the Jews who thought the 120 disciples were intoxicated would not have recognized the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy if this greater work of the Spirit had taken place before their eyes.

The things that took place on Pentecost were what Joel spoke about. They did not fulfill his prophecy. It will be fulfilled in every detail "in the last days."

The End

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

QUESTION: We are told in Matthew 24:37 that "as the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." See also Luke 17:26. Does not this reveal that great wickedness will continue until the second coming of Christ?

ANSWER: No, it does not. The meaning of these words are fully explained by the verses that follow both passages you have cited. The context has nothing to do with "great wickedness." It has to do with fancied security under the spell of which men continue their usual occupations and pursuits, such as eating, drinking, marrying, buying, planting, selling, and building. This is the way it will be when the Son of man comes. Men will then be saying "peace and safety," a thing very few are saying today. I believe that following the coming era of righteousness and peace there will be a resurgence of wickedness, but this is not what is taught in these verses.

QUESTION: It is my understanding that "the times of the Gentiles" began with the Babylonian captivity and that these times continue until the second coming of Christ. Luke 21:24 declares that "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. In view of this, I cannot see any period of blessing for Jerusalem in advance of the second coming of Christ. Have I reasoned wrongly?

ANSWER: The statement that the times of the Gentiles began with the Babylonian captivity has been made so often that no one ever questions it. It has no foundation in Scripture. It is my conviction that the times of the Gentiles spoken of in Luke 21:24 have not yet begun. I believe that this is a brief period when the rebuilt and restored Jerusalem shall again be "compassed with armies." The Greek of Luke 21:24 does not say "trodden down." It says, "Jerusalem shall be trodden by the nations." This probably refers to the time when Jerusalem shall become an armed camp for the nations, which are preparing an attack upon those who have fled to the mountains. Furthermore, "the time of the Gentiles" must be placed entirely within the day of the Lord.

For the day is near, even the day of the Lord is near, a cloudy day: it shall be the time of the heathen (Gentiles). Ezekiel 30:3.

THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

*****The Studies in Acts*, which have appeared in the seven previous issues have not been discontinued. The exposition of Chapter seven will appear, the Lord willing, in our next issue.

****The past four months have been the most strenuous and difficult that I have ever experienced. Each week has seemed to lead from one crisis to another, so that I have at times been "pressed out of measure, above strength." On July 10, Mrs. Sellers entered the hospital due to a severe case of inflammation of the liver, which caused a jaundiced condition. This, according to our Doctors, was caused by a virus, which entered her through the blood used in the transfusions at the time of her surgery last March. She was brought home on July 19, but worsened each day, and was taken back to the hospital on August 12 where she remained until October 19, when we brought her home again. This move indicated no radical improvement as it was simply a change from the hospital to our home. She has been so ill most of this time that full time nursing service has been required, and she is still in bed and critically ill. I have devoted the greater part of my time to her during the past four months. We do not at present expect her to be up before the first of the year. A simple exploratory operation was performed the first week in October in order to determine if some malignancy was causing her illness. We are glad to report that none was found. In all this, I am happy to say, Mrs. Sellers has shown marvelous patience, fortitude and courage. We deeply appreciate all the prayer, the good wishes, the communications, and material help our friends have sent to us. If we have neglected to acknowledge them and express our appreciation, it is because that she has been unable to even write her name, and I have been too busy to even keep our closest friends informed of her condition.

****A year ago we announced tentatively the formation of a *Scripture Research Fellowship* in order to deal with some of the great problems of the Word of God. The project met with real enthusiasm among those invited to participate, and much work was done on it here in our office. But from the time we announced this so many additional burdens were unexpectedly laid upon us that the matter had to be set aside. If possible we hope to take it up again at some future time.

****The Southern California Area Meeting of The Word of Truth Ministry will be held jointly with the Los Angeles Bible Fellowship on Saturday, December 9 and Sunday, December 10. Meetings will be held on Saturday at 7:30 P.M., and on Sunday at 10:30, 3:00 and 7:30. There will be two messages at each meeting. Speakers will be Ray Psalmonds, Harold Hettema, Herbert Baudistel, John Ribbens and Otis Q. Sellers. Place of meetings is 245 South Lucas Avenue in Los Angeles.

****We have no *Companion Bibles* or *Englishman's Greek Concordances* on hand just now, and none will be available until after the first of the year. Do not order these from us if you want them for Christmas gifts.

****At present the Editor is teaching only one night each week in Los Angeles. A meeting for Bible study is held each Tuesday at 7:45 at 607 South Kenmore Avenue. The radio ministry continues every Sunday in Los Angeles over KGER, 1390 KC, from 12:30 to 1:00 P.S.T., and in Grand Rapids over WFUR, 1570 KC, from 2:30 to 3 :00 P.M.

End, Vol. XII, No. 2