

# The Gospel of the Kingdom

Daniel – lists four kingdom, one that revives and then the Kingdom of the Lord that never ends. The first four are actual kingdoms with governments, kings, military and citizens. Why would the Lord's kingdom be an allegory?

Gabriel speaking to Mary says that her son who is to be called Jesus will be great and sit on the throne of his father David. One, there is a lot of context baggage associated with the phrase "sit on the throne of David" when it is said to a Jew in 5 BC. Two, Jesus spoke of sitting on a throne when he returned and promised to place others on thrones to rule when the kingdom of God was established.

Matthew 24:14, "This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the while world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." This verse comes in the middle of Matthew 24 after Jesus warns that there will be:

- Deception by those who come in his name and claim to be Christ and many are deceived
- Wars and rumors of wars. BUT, **THIS IS NOT THE END**. Nation will rise against nation
- Famines, earthquakes...all this is the BEGINNING of birth pains.
- THEN "you" (believers, Christians, Jews, etc.?) will be handed over for persecution and put to death
- "You" (believers, Christians, Church, Jews, etc.?) will be hated by ALL nations because of their association with Jesus Christ.
- AT THAT TIME many of those being persecuted (believers, Christians, Seekers at Church, Jews, etc.):
  - Will turn away from the faith
  - Will betray each other
  - Will hate each other
  - Many false prophets will appear
  - Many (believers, Christians, Seekers, Jews, etc.?) will be DECEIVED
  - Wickedness will increase
  - Love of most will grow cold
- He who stands firm to the end will be SAVED.
- **"This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations..."**
- "and **THEN THE END WILL COME**."

THE END:

- When you see standing in the holy place (Temple) '**the abomination that causes desolation**'
- "spoken of through the prophet Daniel" is a direct link with a direct time marker back to Daniel's prophecy.
  - A potential fulfillment occurred in 167 BC when Antiochus IV Epiphanes set up an altar to Olympian Zeus and a statue of himself in the temple...But, this was not the fulfillment since Jesus says it is yet future when he spoke in 30 AD.
  - A potential fulfillment occurred in 26 AD when Pontius Pilate arrived in Judea as governor and brought the Roman military standards with images of eagles and other idolatrous symbols of the Roman emperor into Jerusalem...But, this occurred four years before Jesus spoke in Matthew 24.
  - A potential fulfillment occurred in 41 AD when Emperor Caligula ordered a bigger than life statue of himself be set up in the temple. Fortunately King Herod Agrippa I convinced

Caligula NOT to follow through with his plan. Caligula died in 41 AD and the decree was never fulfilled.

- A potential fulfilment occurred in 67-68 AD when the Jewish rebels (the Zealots) occupied the temple. During this time common people (not priests) entered the Most Holy Place and committed murder in the temple. These same Zealots eventually fled to seek refuge at Masada where their stand ended in May of 73 AD
- A potential fulfilment occurred when the same Zealots allowed the Idumeans (Edomites) to enter the city of Jerusalem to help plunder the city and kill as many as 8,000 Jews (including the high priest) on the Temple mount.
- A potential fulfilment occurred in the Jewish actions of continuing the OT sacrifices after their rejection of the true Lamb of God, Jesus Christ. These advocates connect Matthew 23:38 when Jesus pronounced judgment and left the temple with Ezekiel 10:18 when the glory of the Lord departs the temple.
- A potential fulfilment occurred in 70 AD with the destruction of the Temple by the Romans

(POINT: Options are either before Jesus said this event was yet future or undefinable if it took place between 30-70 AD. Even Gary DeMar says in his Preterist book, "Last Days Madness" on page 109: *"While disagreement remains as to what form the abomination took, Scripture makes it clear that it occurred soon after Jerusalem was surrounded by armies. As history attests, Jerusalem was surrounded just prior to the temple's destruction in the fall of A.D. 70. The abomination brought desolation."*

24:2 – Not one stone left on another = 70 AD

- Which means the temple will need to be rebuilt before the abomination can come

24:5 – Simon Bar Kokhba ("son of a star") was proclaimed Messiah by Rabbi Akiba

- Result was Roman destruction of Judea, Jerusalem and the Temple 66-70 AD

24:6 – wars, famines, and earthquakes will occur throughout this age. This is NOT the end.

24:8 – Beginning of birth pains is an allusion to the time of suffering known as Jacob's Trouble

24:9 – Disciples handed over to **thlipsis** ("persecution", "distress", "tribulation")

- **Thlipsis** is used 4x in Matthew:

- Twice as a reference to a general kind of trouble: 13:21 and 24:9 (here)
- Twice as a specific future period of unparalleled distress or tribulation: 24:21 and 24:29

- 24:13 – He who stands firm to the end will be saved

- "End" = the end of the **thlipsis** which will end with the **parousia**
- "Saved" = "saved" from sin? "saved" from death and kept alive? Delivered?
- "stands firm" = what does this mean in context and actual application? Stand firm...
  - By using military conflict?
  - By waiting in faith?
  - By hiding?
  - By continuing to profess Jesus as Christ and Lord?
  - By living righteously?

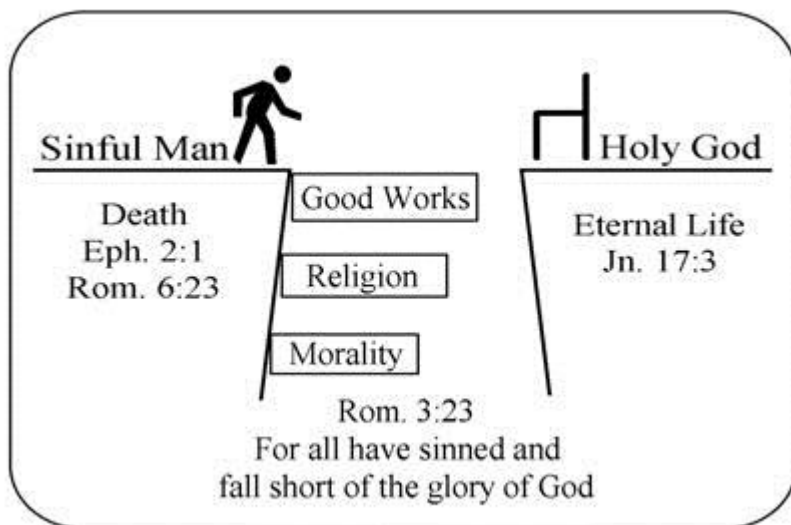
- 24:14 – Gospel of the kingdom preached...then the end

- Proclaim Gospel of kingdom in this situation
- Then the End will come
- Question: Is leading someone to Christ using the four spiritual laws or an evangelical track the equivalent of "proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom"?

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## THE FOUR SPIRITUAL LAWS



## Millennialism

The early writers of the church can be shown to be consistent in understanding the Millennium or the Kingdom to be the literal reign of Jesus Christ on earth AFTER his second coming.

- **Papias** ( born between 61-71 AD)– we only have quotes from Papias' writings that were recorded by the men who followed him. None of Papias' writings have been preserved, but quotes from his writings have been:
  - Eusebius (who himself disagrees with the millennial reign of Jesus since he was Constantine's biographer) writes:
    - "In these [Papias' accounts] he says there would be a certain millennium after the resurrection, and that there would be a corporeal reign of Christ on this very earth; which things he appears to have imagined, as if they were authorized by the apostolic narrations, not understanding correctly those matters which they propounded mystically in their representations. . . . yet he was the cause why most

of the ecclesiastical writers, urging the antiquity of the man, were carried away by a similar opinion; as, for instance Irenaeus, or any other that adopted such sentiments.

- **Epistle of Barnabas** (written around 117-132 AD):
  - “Attend, my children, to the meaning of this expression, “He finished in six days.” This implies that the Lord will finish all things in six thousand years, for a day is with Him a thousand years. And He Himself testifies, saying, “Behold, to-day will be as a thousand years.” Therefore, my children, in six days, that is, in six thousand years, all things will be finished. “And He rested on the seventh day.” This means: when His Son, coming again, shall destroy the time of the wicked man, and judge the ungodly, and change the sun, and the moon, and the stars, then shall He truly rest on the seventh day.”
- **Justin Martyr’s “Dialogue with Trypho”** (written 155 AD) and according to Eusebius Justin wrote “Dialogue” in Ephesus, the Apostle John’s last home town, concerning a debate Justin had had with a Jew named Trypho back in 135 AD. It is likely then that Justin had contact with both Papias and Polycarp. Justin writes:
  - ““But I and others, who are right-minded Christians on all points, are assured that there will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, as the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare.”
  - Justin also wrote, “many who belong to pure and pious faith, and are true Christians, think otherwise.”
- **Irenaeus** writes in his book “Against Heresies” (written 180-199 AD):
  - “These [promises given by Christ] are to take place in the times of the kingdom, that is, upon the seventh day, which has been sanctified, in which God rested from all the works which He created, which is the true Sabbath of the righteous, which they shall not be engaged in any earthly occupation; but shall have a table at hand prepared for them by God, supplying them with all sorts of dishes.”
  - Irenaeus uses Jesus’ promise to His disciples at the last supper to one day drink the fruit of the vine again with them “in my Father’s kingdom” to prove the need for a future, earthly kingdom established after the resurrection.
  - Irenaeus mentions the promise of land given to Abraham by the Lord in millennial context:
    - “If, then, God promised him the inheritance of the land, yet he did not receive it during all the time of his sojourn there, it must be, that together with his seed, that is, those who fear God and believe in Him, he shall receive it at the resurrection of the just.”
  - Irenaeus anticipated the allegorizing of Biblical prophecy when he wrote: “If, however, any shall endeavor to allegorize prophecies of this kind, they shall not be found consistent with themselves in all points.”
- Tertullian debated the Gnostic heretic Marcion (207-212):
  - “But we do confess that a kingdom is promised to us upon the earth, although before heaven, only in another state of existence; inasmuch as it will be after the resurrection for a thousand years in the divinely-built city of Jerusalem, ‘let down from heaven,’ which the apostle also calls ‘our mother from above;’ and, while declaring that our *politeuma*, or citizenship, is in heaven, he predicates of it that it is really a city in heaven. This both Ezekiel had knowledge of and the Apostle John beheld.”
- Hippolytus (170-236) wrote in Rome extensively about the end times. This included a “Commentary of Daniel”:
  - “For the first appearance of our Lord in the flesh took place in Bethlehem, under Augustus, in the year 5500; and He suffered in the thirty-third year. And 6,000 years must needs be accomplished, in order that the Sabbath may come, the rest, the holy day “on

which God rested from all His works.” For the Sabbath is the type and emblem of the future kingdom of the saints, when they “shall reign with Christ,” when He comes from heaven, as John says in his Apocalypse: for “a day with the Lord is as a thousand years.” Since, then, in six days God made all things, it follows that 6,000 years must be fulfilled. And they are not yet fulfilled, as John says: “five are fallen; one is,” that is, the sixth; “the other is not yet come.”

- Interestingly, Hippolytus set the date of Christ’s return to 500 AD.
- Lactantius (250-317 AD):
  - “But He, when He shall have destroyed unrighteousness, and executed His great judgment, and shall have recalled to life the righteous, who have lived from the beginning, will be engaged among men a thousand years, and will rule them with most just command.”
  - “Then they who shall be alive in their bodies shall not die, but during those thousand years shall produce an infinite multitude, and their offspring shall be holy, and beloved by God; but they who shall be raised from the dead shall preside over the living as judges.”
- Commodianus (240 AD):
  - “They shall come also who overcame cruel martyrdom under Antichrist, and they themselves live for the whole time, and receive blessings because they have suffered evil things; and they themselves marrying, beget for a thousand years.”

## Titanic-like Theology

- This is what Paul was warning about in Romans:
  - Romans 11:20-21, “Do not be ARROGANT, but be afraid. For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either...(23) if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.”
  - Romans 11:25, “I do not want you to be IGNORANT of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved...”
- Pre-trib rapture might be the eschatological equivalent of the Titanic:
  - Why make room for life boats, this eschatological model cannot fail!
  - But, every eschatological model created by the study and speculation of man has and will fail.
  - What if you have misplaced the rapture by 42-84 months? It would be a small mistake in time, but a disastrous mistake for those without faith to understand the tests and trails they are about to receive.
- A-millennialism and Post-millennialism are rooted in:
  - The IGNORANCE Paul warned of in Romans 11:25!!
  - The ARROGANCE Paul warned of in Romans 11:20-21!!!
- Pre-millennialism includes the Gospel of the Kingdom.
- My purpose is to simply ask you to let me give you a map and a lifeboat to take along on your Titanic Theology and the Titanic-like faith it produces. Because, if you hit an iceberg that you did not see coming (due to ignorance and arrogance) you will be glad to have this lifeboat and this map.