

Introduction

Why are 77% of the children raised in “churched” families abandoning Christianity?

Why is youth work considered less than 3% effective in helping young people follow Jesus as Lord of their life?

Why is the divorce rate among “church-goers” higher than that of people who *don’t* attend services?

Our heart’s desire in this material is twofold: to help you find some life-changing answers for your family and fellowship family; and, to help you restore to your own faith-walk the *way* of Spirit-empowered life that the earliest followers of Jesus experienced!

Many of the issues we discuss and propose emanate from our research on the earliest Church in 1993-94 in Jerusalem. Out of our continuing investigation have come a variety of books, articles, and video and audio materials to help people who would serve their King in loving obedience in His Kingdom.

Throughout “*Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations*” we’ll refer you to these different references. We encourage you to explore these materials to help you decide for yourself if the information we propose is biblically and historically verifiable. Copies of the books, CDs and DVDs are available by calling 1-888-229-3041. Or, we invite you to **download for free** these materials plus numerous articles and newsletters from our website: <Restorationministries.org>.

Now, please press on, because...

This is a Call to Take Action!

A vital pair of ingredients is missing in most expressions of western Christianity today: First, *intimacy* with God and with fel-

low followers of Jesus — the kind of righteous, load-bearing fellowship which characterized the earliest church. Second, Holy Spirit *power* that propelled this family in Jesus into action. Today’s followers of Jesus need these to be restored in their own lives and in the lives of their families and fellowship family! Through the *Hebraic Restoration* our Father is revealing those facets of faith practice which the earliest followers of Jesus so eagerly embraced in their daily lives.

The information you’re about to read in “*Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations*” expands on the material we present in our video series, *Jesus In Your Home*, particularly as it applies to God’s purpose for fellowshiping in homes. This article is intended to equip you to *discuss with others* the truths you’re reading. What we propose isn’t a gimmick or fad but a *way of life* that was normal for our Father’s children!

You’ll need to seek for yourself the conviction from the Holy Spirit to discern if what we’re presenting is truth from our Lord. In order to restore *collectively* the purposes for fellowship that were first revealed to the Apostles, your discussion and participation with others is essential. You can’t do this alone and hope that your good intentions will bring about transformation in your life!

We’re writing specifically to individuals and families who yearn to walk with the same *foundational considerations* of our earliest forefathers in the faith — men and women who stood their ground in Jesus in the face of the despotic Roman Empire.

But, there’s a cost to this kind of foundational walk:

To experience *relational intimacy and spiritual power* requires courage to question each and all faith practices in which you and your family are involved.

Our Lord is calling you to personally establish *biblical applications* that align with His goals and objectives.

Produced by Restoration Ministries International

• Restoring the Hebraic Foundations of the Earliest Church • Preparing the Family of Jesus to Be Light in Darkness

www.restorationministries.org

e-mail: mikedowg@aol.com

[For more on developing your own biblical applications, see our book, *Christian Halakhahs*.]

So much stands in the way of followers of Jesus restoring what our Father has ordained for His children. But God's timing is critical! What He is restoring coincides with the fulfillment of Jesus' prophetic promise to the Israelites: "*Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled*" (Luke 21:24).

Jerusalem was given back to the Israelites in 1967, and at that time a wonderful outpouring of the Hebraic foundations of the earliest Church began.

[Further discussion of the Hebraic foundations is found in Chapters 1 through 4 of *Restoring the Early Church*, a free download on our website. Also, click on Hebraic Articles: "*A Comparison of the Hebraic Restoration and the Jewish Roots Movement*."]]

The more you examine our research on the early Church, the more you'll be dismayed how far modern Christianity has drifted from its foundational moorings.

Hellenism:

The Language of Satan's Kingdom

The earliest followers of Jesus resisted the pagan Hellenist influence that in time came to dominate organized Christianity. By the late second and third centuries, however, numerous Greek philosophers (commonly referred to as "Church Fathers") converted to Christianity.

For the most part virulently anti-Semitic, these men of influence adamantly hurled down the Hebraic foundations that had been embraced by the earliest Church. Their substitute? Pagan Hellenist practices which they mandated for the Church. (We'll discuss this more in Part 1, "*The KINGDOM of God vs. The Kingdoms of Satan*."

Rather than endeavoring to understand the Hebraic roots of trust-grounded obedience in one's relationship with a very personal Lord or why followers of Jesus fellow-

shipped in homes, Hellenists tried to reconcile neo-Platonism with the Bible. Plato's doctrine divided creation into the holy and pure *spiritual* realm and the loathsome and detestable *physical* arena. Through this mindset, church leadership mandated that only those who had been *separated out* from the rest of common society were worthy enough to approach an unreachable God. Thus was initiated and perpetuated a clergy system of individuals who were far removed from the life and concerns of the "layman".

Tragically disregarded and even denounced were the Hebrew Scriptures, which flow with images of a God Who interacted openly and freely with ALL His people. In contrast the Hellenist would ask, how could a holy God Who separated Himself from the earthly affairs of life lower Himself to reach out to sinful mankind? A "holy intermediary" — a priest — was therefore necessary.

The writings of the Hellenist Church Fathers convinced many that Christianity had emerged out of a spiritual vacuum rather than as a *continuum* riding on the crest of fulfilled Hebrew Scripture prophecies. Through nullifying the Older Testament, Hellenist/Platonic thought birthed the myriad of *pagan-origin religious* and *liturgical practices* still exercised today by most segments of Christianity.

The *vast majority* of religious practices found in western Christendom today have no biblical foundation! Rather, they spring from pagan Hellenism. Tragically, people have grown lethargic and complacent in their communal repression yet have no idea that God didn't intend this situation!

[For more on the insidious influence of Hellenism, see *Restoring the Early Church*, Chapter 5. "*The Loss of Our Hebraic Roots: Christianity's Response to the Jews*", and Chapter 6. "*Greek Philosophy in the Church: How Did Plato Displace God?*"; see also *Pastoring by Elders*, Chapter 2. "*Nicolaitanism, Repression of God's People*."; and our Hebraic Article, "*I Hate Nicolaitanism*."]]

The timing of the restoration of our Father's purposes for His people is all the more crucial because of the ever-increasing decadence and ungodliness blanketing Christendom in the United States. Many with prophetic gifting have warned that this nation has *already* been judged. God's chastisement will come so that people will *turn from lawless rebellion and humbly cry out* in the name of Jesus. But no matter how dark it gets, those who have placed their loving-trust in Jesus can prepare *now* to be light in the darkness.

A Word For Grandparents And Parents

We'll be examining the impact of **humanism** on public schools in Part 2, "*Whose Kids Are They?*" Humanism, the daughter of Hellenism, is a *government-sponsored religion* purposely designed to create controlled conformity to godless values.

[For more on the influence of humanism, see Part 2 of this article, Appendix A, "*The Humanist Manifesto.*"]

Why is this topic so urgently pertinent to this time in history? Government-sponsored godless education has brought about the needless loss of so many children who were raised in Christian homes but have chosen *not* to follow the faith of their parents. As we shared earlier: 77% of children raised by American Christian parents depart the faith when they leave home. Studies have shown that Christian parents, even with the help of Sunday schools and youth groups, are losing the battle against the humanist influence that permeates public schools through humanist-trained teachers and godless textbooks.

[For insights on family responsibility, see *Restoring the Early Church: Chapter 9. "One-on-One: Marriage"* and *Chapter 10. "One-on-One: Parenting."*]

It's important that you understand the demonically-subjugated culture in which we now live. Civilizations from the past which have fallen to this country's current level of

decadence have never recovered.

[See Part 2 of this article, Appendix B, *Cultural Characteristics That Affect the Restoration of Home Fellowships.*]

If you take your faith seriously, it's time to consider the vital steps you need to pursue *now* for both yourself, your children, and your grandchildren. Know this:

Humanism is the religion that's taught in government-sponsored schools. Humanism, the daughter of Hellenism, places man, not God, at the center of all things. The reality of the Almighty is denied.

You can't undo the indoctrination that's accomplished by public education to infect your child with Humanist values.

Are you aware of this?

Hellenism has fostered the rampant lawless apostasy in Christendom in the US. God and His Word are no longer authoritative. Few acknowledge that God has any viable impact on their daily lives or decision-making or lifestyle.

Rather than loving, obedient service to God, man and his desire for happiness, self-fulfillment and personal achievement are the focus of most religious programs throughout western Christendom.

Now is the time for *fathers of all ages* to cooperate together to fulfill their responsibility to God in preparing the generations to follow:

"So that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged" (Deuteronomy 6:2)

For too long, men have operated outside the Word of God, *outsourcing* their wives and children for others to spiritually train. Today over 2/3 of divorces in this country are initiated by wives. Christian men, *this* is the true

fruit of failing to fulfill all your Scriptural responsibilities.

Men can no longer excuse themselves and hope to be welcomed with a “well done” at the Judgment Throne. Together, without a lot of fanfare, brothers in Jesus can cooperate in Hebraic-style home fellowships to be the men our Father desires and can use to raise up godly generations.

It’s especially important that you understand the critical need to restore fellowship in homes as extended spiritual family — a fundamental pattern of the earliest church. [We’ll discuss this more fully in Part 3, “*The Relational Connectedness of the Early Church—Spiritual Tribalism*”; in Part 4, “*Our Father’s Goals and Objectives*”; and Part 5, “*Preparing Succeeding Generations to Follow Jesus.*”]

A Word For Seniors

Older men and women, you may be retired from your vocation, but you can’t retire from your family responsibilities! This is especially true of your spiritual family:

*[Jesus] replied to him, “Who is My mother, and who are My brothers?” Pointing to His disciples, He said, “Here are My mother and My brothers. For **whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother**” (Matthew 12:48-50).*

Your role to mentor succeeding generations was indispensable in the earliest Church. God holds *you* responsible to leave behind you a legacy of godly generations.

You older men of wisdom were the **pastors** of the early Church! You were once our Father’s instruments in helping to produce successors in the faith. The third and fourth century Hellenists introduced young, educated-but-inexperienced professional clergy. This wasn’t God’s doing! He is now restoring older men back to their rightful role as shepherds/pastors of His faith communities.

[See our book, *Pastoring by Elders*, for more on this.]

Older women, today’s young wives need you to teach them how to love their hus-

bands and families through the wisdom you’ve learned over years of experience:

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children (Titus 2:3,4).

Divorce that’s *initiated by women* is rampant in Christianity today. And, a number of Christian ministries are actually encouraging wives to leave their husbands so that they can be “happy” and fulfill their “spiritual potential”. If you don’t help younger women to truly worship their Lord by faithfully loving and serving their husbands and children, who will?

Today’s snare of retirement offers seniors ease and purposeless relaxation. But it’s allowed the grandchildren of today to be drawn into levels of depravity unseen since the civilizations of the Greeks, Romans, and the Dark Ages. But our Father has wonderful plans for you *if* you’ll embrace your responsibilities and discover what He can do *with* and *through* you! In His restoration, *you* older people are pivotal in restoring the Church He called out two millennia ago for His Kingdom.

Encouragement For All

Everyone has a part to play in the restoration of family-style home fellowships that depend on personal involvement as community. No one is a spectator! The fruit of embracing the Covenant Gospel that was received and lived out by the earliest Church is a desire to empty yourself of yearning for personal, soulish gratification. Then, through obedient trust in His power at work in you, you can love and serve both God and mankind for His praise and purposes.

[For more on this topic, see our Hebraic Article, “*The Gospel of the Covenant is the Pilgrimage to Salvation*”.]

Are you fearful or unsure that you can follow this narrow path? Cast those fears aside!

None of this is going to happen without your prayerful dependence on our Father. We're not establishing a new program or a denomination. Our Father requires your *dependence on Him* in order to use you! As you call out to Him and lay your own inclinations aside, the indwelling Holy Spirit will produce in you the loving sacrifice that epitomized our spiritual forefathers — the men and women who first chose to wholeheartedly follow Jesus.

[For in-depth exploration of this topic, see our 2002/09-10 Newsletter, "*Outside the Steeple.*"]

Now let's move on to search out how *you* can walk in the fellowship of love-grounded obedient trust in His Kingdom.

Table of Contents

- Part 1. The KINGDOM of God vs. The Kingdoms of Satan
- Part 2. Whose Kids Are They?
- Part 3. The Relational Connectedness of the Early Church — *Spiritual Tribalism*
- Part 4 Our Father's Goals and Objectives For Home Fellowships
- Part 5 Home Fellowships: Communally Preparing Succeeding Generations to Follow Jesus

Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations

*Training Succeeding Generations to Follow Jesus
Is An Inter-Generational Responsibility*



Part 1

The KINGDOM OF GOD

VS

The Kingdoms of Satan



Introduction to Part 1

A vast battle of kingdoms rages all around you. Because of our limited human horizon, though, you aren't always aware of it. Yet, the Bible urges you to choose the KINGDOM of God over the kingdoms of Satan. Too many think that because they call themselves "Christian" or attend church services, they've already made their choice. This false assumption often traps well-meaning people into thinking they are citizens of God's KINGDOM, when, in fact, they're serving Satan.

The KINGDOM of God is evidenced first in the *rule* that Christ has in your heart as your Lord and King. In a sense, where God rules, He sets up *His government*. Who He is, how He thinks, and His purposes become a part of you as He dwells in you through His Holy Spirit.

Your life in His KINGDOM has little conformity to this world. When you trust wholly in God and in His rule as His beloved child, you become a vessel of His power for His love to grow and manifest itself.

Satan's kingdoms are his influence over all the governments of this world. God cast him down to this earth and, for the time being, the dominions of this world are his. This is why, if you truly love our Lord and want to be found faithful in Him, you must be careful where you place your trust and dependence.

This issue is far more important than what creed you embrace or what congregation you attend. Where, or in whom, you place your trust is where all your other motivations will emanate from.

Trust in God allows Him to establish His KINGDOM in your heart. Your *ongoing trust in Jesus* and *your growth in the character of Jesus* are your assurance of your welcome on the "day of salvation" at the Judgement Throne.

Placing your trust in any of the kingdoms of Satan is like a married man who keeps a lover on the side. His adultery is a pathway to death.

Judge for yourself: Is your trust *only* in the KING of KINGS?

Part 1

The KINGDOM of God vs. The Kingdoms of Satan

Can people *really* be governed in their hearts by God and His Word?

One of the strongest tenets of Scripture holds that our Lord intended that government on earth be *Theocratic*; in other words, that God be our ruler and King.

The Older Testament lays the foundation for God to individually and collectively rule His people, the nation of Israel. However, as history has demonstrated, yielding to the Kingship of God was as difficult for them as for the rest of mankind!

Throughout Scripture only a few, a *remnant*, have ever been able to relate to God as He has revealed Himself: our *Lord* as well as our Father in heaven. He has shown Himself through His Creation and His Word to be omniscient, omnipresent, all-powerful, eternal, full of love and compassion, just and yet merciful. He rewards those who earnestly seek Him, and punishes those who reject Him. In all of this He is King.

Let's personalize this idea. Theocracy is first and foremost the rule of God *in your heart*. God's rulership begins in your inner person, where the Spirit of God begins to change your nature to conform to His character:

*The Lord your God will **circumcise your hearts** and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love Him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live* (Deuteronomy 30:6; see also Colossians 2:11).

God's Theocracy in your heart increases as your sin nature is circumcised and replaced by the nature of Jesus. His Theocracy calls for the simple trust of our father Abraham: "*What does the Scripture say? Abraham trusted God, and it was credited to him as righteousness*" (Romans 4:3). This is the backbone of the Hebraic Restoration — your complete trust in our heavenly Father, and evidencing that loving-trust in a life that glorifies Him.

The Rebellious Attempt To Define God

Rather than yielding to God's Theocracy, generations of men have tried to define Him under the guise of "theology". *Defining* God according to human reasoning keeps Him from being recognized as **Who He really is!**

God warns those who would diminish Him with a man-reasoned definition, "*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,*" says the LORD. *'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts'*" (Isaiah 55:8,9).

He is beyond human comprehension, yet many rebellious people try to confine Him within a theological box. If man can reduce God to someone who can be understood, then He can be manipulated and controlled.

This is the method of empirical science — to study, understand, and finally, control. And, it is the undeniable method of many deceived theologians. This approach, however, will never work with God!

Let's remember with humility the real nature of man:

The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. . .The Lord smelled the pleasing [sacrificial] aroma and said in His heart: 'Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood' (Genesis 6:5; 8:21a).

The merciful ways of the God of the Bible are wondrous and incomprehensible. He enables His people to be "*with Christ, and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus*" (Ephesians 2:6). At the same time He tells us that "*you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you*" (1

Corinthians 3:16). How can anyone get a grip on God, and how He can make these things happen?

Unlike the kingdoms and governments of man, the KINGDOM of God is not easily seen, for *“the kingdom of God is **within you**”* (Luke 17:21b).

His KINGDOM is spiritual — ruling the *heart* of man and enabling you to be conformed to the likeness of Jesus.

The Israelites of old were as willfully blind as many Christians are today in their lusting after idols. They manufactured images to suit *their* concept of a god. For example, while Moses was seeking the true God on the mountain, the people were carousing around a golden calf. Be warned! Worshiping a god that pleases *you* but isn't the God of the Bible is dangerous. Three thousand idolatrous Israelites were struck down by the Levites, while others perished by plague. (See Exodus 32:27-35.)

Can the rebellious worshipers of today who have made God into *their own image* expect any less consequence?

- **Before you read further, would you describe yourself as “Kingdom person”, or a “churched person”? Why?**

- **Is your own faith walk defined by your creed, your denomination, the congregation you attend, or on your daily service in representing King Jesus to the world? Explain.**

- **How intense is your desire to be more like Jesus in love and motivation? Describe yourself. Have those who know you well describe you.**

Our God Loves Because It Is Within His Character, Not Because We Deserve It

Picture the faithless foolishness of the Israelites. Dissatisfied with the protection and provision of their Heavenly King, the elders approached the prophet Samuel to demand that God appoint for them a monarch like those of other nations (1 Samuel 8). Once again manifesting stiff-necked rebellion and stubbornness, Israel turned their back on the One Who had so mightily demonstrated His love for them.

Count how many times expressions of God's *love for His people* show up in this passage, and His mercy for those who *love Him*:

The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Therefore know that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face (Deuteronomy 7:7-10).

God not only kept His promise to the Patriarchs to bring the Israelites out of Egypt; He then revealed Himself as their *uniquely personal God*: ***“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery”*** (Exodus 20:2).

Our *Covenant-giving* and *Covenant-keeping* God promised Israel His personal leadership and protection in exchange for their love and obedience to His commands. *Covenant*, that is, to ***live in union with***, is God's way for people to experience Him in their lives. The Israelites vowed to keep His

commandments, and He would keep His promises to them. Quite a simple relationship if His people submitted to Him!

Yet, ongoing human rebellion has made this covenant of love difficult to keep, even for followers of Jesus today.

[See our Hebraic article, *The Gospel of the Covenant is the Pilgrimage to Salvation*, for more on how you can live in covenant union with our Father through Jesus.]

The Kingdom of God Is Led By Elders Who Represent His Loving Concern For His Children

Up until the crisis point of rebellion outlined in 1 Samuel 8, God ruled every Israelite individual, family, clan and tribe. His rule was coordinated through the elders. Elders, or *zaknim* (*zahk-NEEM*, singular *zaken*), were highly regarded, gray-bearded family leaders who had acquired wisdom over the years and applied it to family situations.

[Our book, *Pastoring by Elders*, details the biblical role of elder, and his role in leading and guiding home fellowships in wisdom today.]

The *collective leadership* of the elders — their council — was based on family ties. Older, wiser men represented their families, clans and tribes at each level. Under God's watchful eye, authority in Israel rested within families led by elders who were esteemed for their age and wisdom. Note, however, that not all older men became elders. As an ancient sage wrote, some men remain "as advanced in their folly as in years."

All throughout the Older Testament you see the role of elders as they guided the people, applied God's commands, and enforced obedience. For example, when God sent Moses back to Egypt to free His people, He told him, "Go, assemble the **elders of Israel**" (Exodus 3:16).

The elders of the people made themselves accessible by sitting at the city gate, where commerce was conducted in the marketplace and travelers entered and exited.

Not much escaped their notice in the community! As they represented God and His Word, they applied His commands to particular situations. The elders had authority to make sure that for the good of the people, God's commands were carried out.

Both then and now: It is God's intent that elders represent Him and His standards directly in the affairs of His people. Prized as respected men of value to the community, these older men were probably unable to earn a living through labor, and were most likely supported by their families. In this manner they were available to serve the people with their wisdom.

Applying sCriptural truth to everyday decisions was key to maintaining peace in the community. For example, in Chapter 4 of the Book of Ruth, Boaz approached the elders to determine who had the right to be the "kinsman-redeemer" for Naomi's property. After hearing the case the elder council passed judgment that Boaz could marry Ruth and acquire the property. Their decision was known as a *halakhah*, a biblical application to a specific situation.

[For more about biblical applications, see our book, *Christian Halakhahs*.]

Ever mindful of the good of the community as a whole, the elders served as the "court of last resort" to deal with hardened disobedience. They recognized that unconfessed sin could infect others as surely as would a plague. This is the lesson behind the seemingly harsh command given in Deuteronomy 21:18-21, one which has never been recorded as being carried out:

- *If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him [not a one-time act of defiance but a pattern of refusal to obey or to respond to discipline],*
- *his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. [This is a public affair because other young people will be affected by the*

rebellion if left unchecked.]

• **They shall say to the elders, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a *profligate and a drunkard.*’** [The parents realize they are ineffectual in correcting this son. Note that the young man is not a child but someone who is habitually drunk and shamelessly immoral.]

• **Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death. You *must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid.*** [Decisions made at a local level can impact the whole nation with holy fear!]

Obedience to our loving Lord is crucial, even at the cost of family relationship or friendship. All too often sin is tolerated under the guise of “not wanting to be judgmental.” But God *is* a judge, and His commands *are* the standard by which He judges if our relationship with Him is authentic or mere lip service. Instead of ignoring sin, far better to turn an unrepentant person over to Satan to be chewed on so that his sin nature can be torn apart and his heart changed! (See 1 Corinthians 5:5.)

An important point worth repeating: A *plurality* of elders determined biblical applications for each situation. No single individual was expected to hear from God on behalf of everyone else. Boaz was able to address ten elders *together* to decide his case.

We get another glimpse of elder availability and esteem among the people in Proverbs: “*Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land*” (31:23).

Recognition of the weighty respect accorded to the decisions of elders was the foundation of leadership in the early Church. As we shall see, their pattern of council decision-making reflected *tribalism* as the *relational connectedness* of the early Church. Grievously, during the second and third centuries’ influence of Hellenism, the wise service of elders was replaced by a class of young, educated clergy who were devoid of the wisdom that’s gleaned from years of life experience.

**“God, the blessed and only Ruler,
the King of kings and Lord of lords”
(1 Timothy 6:15)**

**If ancient Israel had NOT
demanded an earthly king,
what role would the Nation of Israel today
have under the Kingship of God?**

What if the Israelites had chosen to trust and obey their Maker and Husband, God? How would the mighty acts of God’s blessing and provision that were promised to Israel for its obedience have influenced other nations over these centuries? The living, evidential proof of God’s love and power would have been staggering!

Now consider what has happened to Israel since they *rejected* the Lordship of God. It hasn’t gone well. As a follower of Jesus today, ask *yourself*:

**Have I, like Israel of old, placed
greater trust in anything or anyone
(including myself or my government)
than I have in God?**

If so, be warned. This is *idolatry!*

The consequences suffered by Israel are the same today for all who refuse God’s rule in their life. To be *Lord* means that HE RULES. His right to rule your life is the underlying meaning of this oft-quoted verse:

*...the word about trust which we proclaim, namely, that if you acknowledge publicly with your mouth that **Jesus is Lord** and trust in your heart that God delivered Him from the dead, you will be delivered. For with the heart one goes on trusting and thus continues toward righteousness, while with the mouth one keeps on making public acknowledgment and thus continues toward deliverance* (Romans 10:8b-10, JNT).

Your pilgrimage with King Jesus is *ongoing*. Confessing His LORDSHIP in your life testifies to others that you have chosen to

live in Covenant union with Him as His beloved bondservant. Your ongoing heart-trust declares to our Father that you are assured of His forgiveness through the sacrifice of Jesus as your sin-bearer.

Those who attempt to define God today have minimized the *Lordship* of Jesus by de-emphasizing His right to rule in favor of magnifying what *they* want, namely, getting “saved”. Separating the *Lordship* of Jesus from His role as wonderful Savior gives the rebellious an opening for disobedience and compromise with the world — spiritual adultery.

Haven’t you met people who are knee-deep in sin but who nonchalantly believe they’ll be accepted into Jesus’ presence because they “went forward” when they were ten years old? What a tragic deception! Reread that Romans 10 passage above!

The Lordship of Jesus entails an *ongoing awe* of His holiness as well as a grateful heart for His mercy. If you are Kingdom-minded, what is truly in your heart will be evidenced by your life. If you really believe in your heart that He is Who He says He is, then His indwelling Spirit will stir you to serve Him as King and Lord, and bring praise to Him. On the other hand, if you look at getting “saved” as “fire insurance” that’s been added to willful choices of disobedience, you’d be wise to turn NOW!

The Gospel of Jesus commands you to *repent* — to purpose to **turn away from sin** and to **come to our Father** for forgiveness and reconciliation. This is a *love relationship* that calls you through His Spirit to apply His commands to your life. Love that’s accompanied by a holy and awesome fear of God as both **Savior and Lord** is a good and necessary starting point for your life in His Kingdom! *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding”* (Proverbs 9:10).

“Appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have”

(1 Samuel 8:5).

The Israelites issued to the prophet

Samuel a demand for a government like that of the nations that *hadn’t* been called out by God as His chosen people. The repercussions for that defiant act stretch far beyond the immediate effect on ancient Israel. Rejection of God’s Kingship and His right to rule delayed until the fullness of time His Kingdom being extended to all the world through the people of Israel.

While Samuel felt holy anger, our Father was grieved: *“Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is **not you** they have rejected, but they have **rejected Me as their king**”* (1 Samuel 8:7).

Can you imagine the sorrow of God? He had chosen Israel out of love, calling her His wife, His cherished possession. Time and again God had intervened to deliver and sustain them. Their response? They rejected Him as King. In place of His lavish love and protection, they wanted a human being. That willful insult to our Lord brought them generations of dispersion, captivity and slavery.

Many years later, through the prophet Hosea, God revealed His anger at their choice of a human king: *“Where is your king, that he may save you? Where are your rulers in all your towns, of whom you said, ‘Give me a king and princes’? So in My anger I gave you a king, and in My wrath I took him away”* (Hosea 13:10,11).

While God did in anger yield to their desire, His response clearly depicted the consequences of rejecting His Kingship. A cursed string of self-indulgent, evil-bent rulers plagued Israel. All of the sorrowful consequences prophesied by Samuel had come to bear upon the people *“who wanted a human king.”* And as history has proved, any nation that puts their trust in earthly governments rather than in God will reap a whirlwind of affliction. This is what has been going on in the United States since its founding.

Centuries later Jesus came to manifest for Israel once again the nature of His Kingdom. Again focused on earthly government, the Israelites ignored their need for the rule

of God in each heart. Rejecting the KINGDOM, they killed the holy Messenger King.

Human Kings and Presidents Are Satan's Pawns of Power

Mankind in power not only embodies the rejection of God's Kingdom but also thrusts a nation straight into the dominion of Satan. Do you question who claims ownership of earth's kingdoms? Recall the encounter between the devil and Jesus during His forty days in the wilderness. At the close of that testing time, "[Satan] took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him **all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor**. 'All this I will give You,' he said, 'if You will bow down and worship me'" (Matthew 4:8,9).

Jesus didn't question the devil's right to the governments of this world. Instead, He reminded Satan that *God alone* is to be worshiped as Lord, whether in heaven or on earth. "Jesus said to him, 'Away from Me, Satan! For it is written: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only"' (Matthew 4:10).

True worship of God comes from a loving, obedient, **Theocratic heart** that yearns to live in His Kingdom and lovingly serve your King's purposes. And, His Word assures us that the Holy Spirit is able to work powerfully in your yielded heart so that the rule of God can reign in your innermost being.

As you apply His Word to your life in grateful obedience, a character transformation takes place. You become more and more conformed to the image of Jesus.

[Learn more about this transformation in our 2002/12 Newsletter, "Acquiring the Character of Jesus."]

When God rules your heart, you are safe in His keeping no matter what trials you face. If you're dwelling in the palm of His hand, you can see God in every life encounter.

Your will becomes entwined with His will, and your life choices reflect that union. He meets the desires of your heart because *His will* has become *your will*!

The Nature of Satan's Kingdom

Satan's dominion is always at war against God's Kingdom. At one time Satan enjoyed the heavenly presence of our Lord as His servant. But arrogance and rebellion overtook his devotion to God. Isaiah describes Satan's expulsion to earth:

How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart [the motivation that leads to actions], 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, [the very place from which King Jesus will reign] on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High (Isaiah 14:12-14).

Some scholars feel this passage deals solely with the king of Babylon. However, the pride and presumption that brought about that ruler's downfall mirrored the arrogance that had taken place in the heavens long before.

The Revelation to John confirms both Satan's positioning on earth and the target of his wrath: "The great dragon was hurled down — that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels [known as demons] with him" (12:9). His particular target? "Those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus" (12:17).

Through Satan's dominions on earth, deceit and subterfuge ensnare God's people who are not watchful. In particular the devil uses earthly governments in his battle against "those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus."

A follower of Jesus must be cautious and spiritually discerning in placing his trust in any government programs and institutions.

By enticing you to place your confidence in earthly governments, Satan will try to undermine your trusting obedience to God's commands. One devious battleground in which the devil is hard at work is through **compulsory public education**. On this battlefield of the war he has created generations of rebellious people who are totally ignorant of and unconcerned with God's laws.

[We will discuss this more fully in Part 2, "Whose Kids Are They?"]

Paul foretold this present time to the Hellenist-enveloped believers in Thessalonika: *Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the **man of lawlessness** [one who disregards the worth of God's teachings in His commands] is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.*

*He will **oppose** [through all those town and school ordinances that forbid any reference to Jesus through display or artwork] and will **exalt himself** [humanism] over everything that is **called God** or is worshiped, so that he sets **himself up in God's temple**, [lies that even churchgoers believe!] proclaiming himself to be God (2 Thessalonians 2:3,4).*

Remember Isaiah's description of Satan's motives? "I will make myself like **the Most High**." Paul apperceives that same arrogant plan of the law-less: "He sets himself up in God's temple, **proclaiming himself to be God**." The motivation of god-lessness in the schools is clear:

If Satan can gain control over the minds of the young, he can influence the generations to come to ignore God as irrelevant. In that void, he himself will be exalted in their lives.

Have no doubt about Satan's goals. The governments of the earth belong to his kingdom. Through these governments he competes for the glory that only God deserves.

The very curse that God placed on the Israelites of old has landed on all other governments in which trust in man is greater than trust in God.

This concept becomes clearer as you examine 1 Samuel 8:5-20. The Israelite demand for a human king was a boast to God that "we can take care of ourselves." They evaluated God by the standards of the nations and their idols, and found Him wanting. By rejecting His position as Lord over them, the Israelites believed that they could confine God to their religious forms and observances — and compromise with the world around them.

Many in Christendom today are similarly deceived. They put on their Sunday-best faces for religious services, then shelf God until the next time they sit in the pew under the steeple. Generation after generation has tried to stuff God into man-made "theological boxes". Then our Almighty just as diligently explodes the parameters of each system of religious thought!

Because our Creator has endowed humanity with free will, mankind is bombarded with two opposing absolutes:

- (1) **the vast unfathomable characteristics of God that are on display throughout nature to testify to His greatness.**
- (2) **the rebellious hearts of descendants of Adam and Eve who refuse to see.**

If it weren't for the presence of the Holy Spirit, how many more of us would construct our own golden calf to worship? Are you among those who quench and grieve the Holy Spirit by placing your confidence in earthly governments rather than God? Beware! These are Satan's domain.

Don't Forget! God Knows Everything

A large segment of Christianity denies God's omniscience, presupposing that all throughout history God has somehow been caught by surprise.

**Man's actions have somehow
thwarted God's will;
therefore, God must react to man's
disobedience through an alternate plan.**

Nothing could be further from the truth. Even when Israel demanded a king, for instance, God knew beforehand. His command years in advance to Moses detailed His plan for the people:

- *When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, 'Let us set a **king over us like all the nations** around us,' be sure to appoint over you the **king the Lord your God chooses**. [As a king goes in his relationship to God, so go the people.]*
- *He must be from among your own brothers. Do **not place a foreigner** [one who has followed other gods] over you, one who is not a **brother Israelite**. [It's important to maintain our spiritual identity as belonging to God!]*
- *The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people **return to Egypt** [the "good old days" mindset will only lead to disobedience] to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, 'You are not to go back that way again.'*
- *He **must not take many wives** [marriage is supposed to reflect the spiritual union of covenant you have with our Father], or his **heart will be led astray** [the flesh always wars against the spirit].*
- *He **must not accumulate** large amounts of silver and gold [independence and lust for material goods blinds you to your need for Jesus. For a leader, such hunger leads to higher taxes and plunder of the people].*
- *When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to **write for himself** [make sure you yourself are in the Word and hearing from the Spirit! Don't chew on predigested or stale, lifeless teaching] on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites.*
- *It is to **be with him**, [don't hide your Bible on a shelf] and he is to **read it** all the days*

*of his life so that he may **learn to revere** [a lifelong process] the Lord his God and **follow carefully** [deeds must accompany the reading or you relegate the Word to the status of a history book] all the words of this law and these decrees*

- *and **not consider himself better** than his brothers [servant leadership puts you at the bottom to come alongside with others rather than lord power over them] and **turn from the law** to the right or to the left [rationalizing away God's Word with a "that was then, this is now" excuse does not justify your sins].*
- *Then he and his **descendants** [Are you concerned for the spiritual well-being of your descendants?] will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel" [Because of disobedience, this didn't happen! Are you willing to have the buck of responsibility stop here with you?] (Deuteronomy 17:14-20).*

In this passage, God emphasized the appointed king's responsibility to keep His commands. He wasn't surprised by their failures, because as the God of eternity He saw their rejection coming! The commands He gave the kings could only be kept if they came to Him with humble hearts and cried out for help. Even the first three kings of Israel — ones to whom God showed great favor — stumbled into glaring unrighteousness:

- King Saul lost his kingdom through outright disobedience and rebellious pride (see 1 Samuel 15).
- King David was a murderer and adulterer. Then, "*Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel*" (1 Chronicles 21:1). Satan enticed him to put his confidence in the size of his army. Pride again reared its face! God's response: "*This command was also evil in the sight of God; so He **punished Israel***" (21:7). God's plague of punishment cost 70,000 individuals their lives. Despite these shortcomings, however, David kept his kingdom because he was *repentant* when God convicted him.

- King Solomon violated God's commands by explicitly returning to Egypt for both goods and a wife: "*Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt*" (2 Chronicles 1:16a). "*King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter*" (1 Kings 11:1a). And as God had warned, the king's lust for women turned him away from devotion to the one true Lord: "*They were from nations about which the Lord had told the Israelites, 'You **must not intermarry** with them, because they will surely **turn your hearts** after their gods.'* Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love . . . and his wives **led him astray**. As Solomon grew old, his wives **turned his heart after other gods**, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been" (1 Kings 11:1b-4).

Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived, yet something went desperately wrong in his decision making. Through his son Rehoboam he left a terrible legacy of the divided kingdoms of Judah and Israel because of his choice to forsake God to serve other deities. After a period of God's long-suffering patience, both kingdoms were destroyed. First the people of Israel, then those of Judah, were conquered and hauled off into subjugation.

Think about their captivity for a moment. Was that the foreshadowing of churchgoers today who are in bondage to demonic strongholds because they have forsaken (or never even appropriated!) devotion to Jesus as the LORD of their lives?

Or, is this self-imposed bondage of disobedience and disbelief why God intends to chastise this nation — because so many blindly place their trust in the government rather than Him?

[See Lifebyte 34, *The Abrahamic Covenant—Groundwork For The Hebraic Restoration*, and Lifebyte 40, *Do You Confront For Jesus? Or, Placate For Satan?* for more on tolerated iniquity and sin within Christendom today.]

Beware of Those Who Say, "Give Us A King!"

In a sense, when the Israelites demanded a king, they were erecting their own Tower of Babel. Observing the way the pagan nations around them approached and appeased their gods, the Israelites wanted the same structure. And just as the Babel builders were scattered to all points of the world, in time, so were the Israelites. Their *idolatry* separated them from God's presence and from His land.

God's people today need to learn from these errors. As Paul warned, "*These things happened to them as **examples** and were written down as **warnings for us**, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come*" (1 Corinthians 10:11). Don't ignore the lessons of the past!

When those Israelites demanded a king that day, the consequences were felt all throughout history to the present. Except in countries where followers of Jesus are experiencing persecution, people are continuing to put their trust in government rather than in God. But realize this: Governments, for the sake of their own survival, put their trust in *armies*.

Today, to their own detriment, both the *United States* and *Israel* depend on their military might and technology to save them. Refusing to repent and fall upon Jesus for mercy, these nations have chosen military might for their protection and deliverance. The lessons of the past have fallen on deaf ears.

We haven't learned. Prophetically this era represents another period of showdown between God and Israel as well as God and the United States. In whom will the people trust, God or guns? Satan's domain, that is, his governments on earth, compete with God for the loyalty and trust of the people. Whom will the *remnant* choose?

Where we place our trust is mirrored in the response of the kings of Israel, who indeed needed ears to hear. The humility of heart called for in II Chronicles 7:14 is a keen example of God's faithful intervention:

If My people, who are called by My name, will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Some indeed responded in humble trust. King Jehoshaphat chose to focus on the power of God rather than the might of his army. We're told, "*The fear of the Lord fell on all the kingdoms of the lands surrounding Judah, so that they **did not make war** with Jehoshaphat*" (2 Chronicles 17:10).

King Hezekiah, another ruler of Judah, had been faithful to the ways of God. Without hesitation he and the prophet Isaiah cried out to Heaven to confront their enemy invader (2 Chronicles 32:20). That plea brought forth both immediate victory and future intervention! Because they humbled themselves and sought the Lord, He "*sent an **angel, who annihilated** all the fighting men and the leaders and officers in the camp of the Assyrian king. So he withdrew to his own land in disgrace. And when he went into the temple of his god, some of his sons **cut him down with the sword***" (v.21).

The rulers who put their trust in themselves faced judgment. And as the leader goes, so go the people. In the case of wicked King Joash, God chose to chastise him through a minor enemy: "*Although the Aramean army had come with **only a few men**, the Lord delivered into their hands a much larger army. Because **Judah had forsaken the Lord**, the God of their fathers, judgment was executed on Joash*" (2 Chronicles 24:24).

Humble and loving obedient trust in God — the path He has ordained for His people — brings His protection, provision and blessing. Trust in man, on the other hand, births consequences no one can bear.

Consequences of Disobedience

Choosing a man to be king brings a multitude of painful consequences. Governments cost money to maintain, and man-

power to serve kingdom interests is expensive. Here, the prophet Samuel speaks for God:

*This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will **take your sons** [they're no longer available for family endeavors] and make them **serve** with his chariots and horses, and they will **run in front** of his chariots [as mouthpieces for the king's glory]. Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties [positions of responsibility demanding long-term commitment], and others to **plow his ground and reap his harvest** [while their own harvest is diminished for lack of workers], and still others to **make weapons of war** and equipment for his chariots [manufacture of materials that don't put food on the table] (1 Samuel 8:11,12).*

In order to keep himself in power, a king needs a standing army. As we shall see in Part 2, governments with standing armies must compete with parents for the loyalty of their children. The children are the target of government indoctrination through public education to serve the State's purposes. The State can't allow parents to carry out the full biblical responsibility to their children that the Word calls for. Why not?

To be mighty in military power the government must enforce compulsory public education. Through this means they can gain domination over the thought and value systems of each generation, a direct assault on biblical parenting.

To ensure its ongoing survival, governments must develop weapons ever more deadly and destructive. And when the nation is not at war, weapon makers can export them for profit to kill countless people in other nation's wars.

A frightening fact: The godless military power of the US stands unchallenged in the world arena — though many nations are trying to change that dubious distinction. This

reality is turning this land into an arrogant rogue nation. In today's "New World Order", individuals and families lose many personal rights. The government is gaining control through fear tactics just as the Nazis did. Fear tactics are well-entrenched in the US already. *Fear* is behind the readiness of many to give up personal freedom and put their trust in the government.

The exercise of government rights over you and your family doesn't stop with but-
tressing the military establishment.

He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers [and who knows what else...]. He will take the best of your fields [confiscation of the best land for "government need"] and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants [political favors and payback]. He will take a tenth of your grain [your taxes] and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. [Government officials line their own pockets with hefty pensions.] He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves [The truth: You exchange your freedom of biblical responsibility in Jesus for the bondage of state security.] (1 Samuel 8:13-17).

Government of the people, by the people, for the people serves an insatiably hungry machine! The incredible increase in taxes sustains a standing military force. Ever more people are required in government administration to keep the system running. Government service employees don't contribute to the production sector of the economy. Therefore, their needs in the market place drive up prices for everyone else.

In order for the system to exist, the government must ensure that the majority of its employees attend government-sponsored schools. Although not put in these terms, children are taught that their first loyalty is to their country to maintain their way of life. By that indoctrination the government sys-

tem can be sustained.

Our Father warned that there would be a time when the people who put their trust in government would eventually cry out to Him, but in vain:

When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you in that day (1 Samuel 8:18).

Keep in mind, the human rule that the people have asked for has placed them under Satan's domain on earth. *Oppression* is the hallmark of the devil's government. Even if the people come to their senses and see the depravity of their demand, they are bogged down in the quagmire of self-focus and hunger for instant gratification.

Rebellion always pushes too far.

But the people refused to listen to Samuel. 'No!' they said. 'We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles [because we don't want to trust in the mighty God of power who has so miraculously intervened time and again. What if He doesn't go ahead of us?]' (1 Samuel 8:19,20).

As it always is: When the "king" declares war, your sons and daughters die. Trust in self-dependence rather than God-dependence makes a glaring statement: **Man doubts the ability of the Creator of the universe to take care of all that He created.** This is an attack on God's character. The Bible as well as history reveal that sins against God's character bring the most dire consequences. God takes the idolatry of man's rebellion as a personal issue.

Now contrast the Godless man-centered kingdoms of the earth with the KINGDOM saints esteemed by our Lord: *"And without trust it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him"* (Hebrews 11:6).

No government organization has motivated the men and women over the centuries who have eagerly forsaken compromise in order to lovingly serve their King.

These individuals have been so sold out to Jesus that whatever our Lord desired they did obediently. Their Kingdom was not of this world, for they were seeking the City and the reward that God was preparing for them.

This is the way of those who serve in God's Kingdom on earth. His loving followers fulfill His purposes here, not trusting earthly governments in areas which impede their ability to obey our Lord and His Word.

*“When times are good, be happy;
but when times are bad, consider:
God has made the one
as well as the other”*

(Ecclesiastes 7:14a).

Alarms have sounded since the inception of this nation. When the thirteen colonies were still part of England, Professor Alexander Tyler warned:

A *democracy* cannot exist as a permanent form of government. It can only exist until the voters discover that they can vote themselves money from the public treasure. From that moment on the majority *always vote for the candidates promising the most money* from the public treasury, with the results that a *democracy always collapses* over loose fiscal policy followed by a dictatorship. The average age of the world's great civilizations is two hundred years. [emphasis added]

We've mentioned in other writings that the United States is in the Atomistic Stage of societal meltdown. Everyone is out for themselves. No culture has ever come out of this stage. Bondage and dictatorship are our future.

[See Appendix B at the end of Part 2 for more on the Atomistic, Trustee, and Domestic families in civilizations.]

To warn His children, our Father often uses difficult times to get us to stop and consider. Often throughout the Bible our Lord orchestrated famine, plagues and wars to deal with His people.

For instance, *“During the reign of David, there was a **famine** for three successive years; so David sought the face of the Lord. The Lord said, ‘It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death’”* (2 Samuel 21:1). King David sought God for His reason for the famine. And true to His character, God revealed His purpose.

God spoke through the prophet Amos that it is *He* who sends, drought, mildew, plagues and war. But God's solemn appraisal of man's response? *“Yet you **have not returned to Me,** declares the LORD”* (see Amos 4:8-11).

We do have a longsuffering God, but He does chastise so that people will humbly repent and return to Him. As Scripture so repeatedly demonstrates, He *is* capable of becoming angry when people become exceedingly depraved in their sin and ignore His warnings.

A Lesson From the “Great Depression”

Early in this nation's history, government officials called for *repentance and fasting* when difficult times occurred. But in the past hundred years such calls have all but disappeared at the government level. (Although the past decade has found officials publicly urging prayer to the god of their choice...)

During the 1930's, a time of famine and financial desperation seized this land. In response President Roosevelt enlarged dependence on the government by passing Social Security and other socialist-style programs. Rather than leading this nation in

repentance, he established the bondage of government debt.

The trend has continued unabated. The government borrows to support programs in one generation which will be paid for by succeeding generations. If you talk with any retiree or welfare recipient, you'll discover just how dependent on government provision people have become. But who pays for it? Their children and their children's children.

Let's look at an alternate perception of the Great Depression. God was *chastising* this nation because it pursued extreme decadence and greed during the 1920's. Previous economic recessions in this nation had followed periods of widespread unrighteousness. But through bold exhortation by those dedicated to God, and even through presidential pleas, *repentance and fasting* were called for, and God relented from His chastisement.

People who *understood the times*, as did men from the ancient tribe of Issachar, recognized the Lord's hand and issued the call to turn from sin:

- *When I [GOD sends catastrophe to get people's attention] shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among My people [even Christians face catastrophe],*
- *if My people, who are called by My name [not outsiders or the worldly but those who claim to know Him!],*
- *will humble themselves [we have to choose to change our hearts and put our independence on His altar]*
- *and pray and seek My face [seeking His FACE means calling upon Him as LORD, not just looking for solutions to immediate problems]*
- *and turn from their wicked ways [God won't answer the pleas of those who continue to hold onto their sins and iniquities],*
- *then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin [the key issue here]*
- *and will heal their land [the land had*

suffered because of the people's choice to sin]" (2 Chronicles 7:13,14).

[For more on understanding the current times, see our prophetic article, "*A Time for the Men of Issachar*", under Hebraic Articles on our web-site.]

Back to the 1930's. *Repentance*, not government programs, would have brought about a different outcome for all of us today. At that critical point in time, people faced a choice: to turn to God or to submit to Satan. The devil, under the guise of a benevolent government, won their allegiance. Again, consider the last century and the explosive growth in dependence on government programs.

Since there was no repentance, the Great Depression of the 30's was followed by World War II in the 40's, the Korean Conflict in the 50's, the Vietnam War (and strident, divisive protest on many fronts at home) in the 60's and 70's, and hostilities in Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq for the past two decades.

These conditions of strife have sprung one upon another in quick succession. This land is not hearing God's call to repent. The sad testimony of the twentieth century is this:

Not a single generation in the US could proclaim that they hadn't lost their sons and daughters in battle.

On the other hand, our Lord tells us, "*When a man's [or a nation's] ways are pleasing to the Lord, He makes even his enemies live at peace with him*" (Proverbs 16:7). This certainly doesn't reflect the history of the United States over the last hundred years. A nation that pleases Him is assured, "*For the Lord your God will bless you as He has promised, and you will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. You will rule over many nations but none will rule over you*" (Deuteronomy 15:6).

Do you know? The United States is the now the *largest borrowing nation* in the world. We rob other nations of available

funds that could be used to help their own desperately needy. The combined *personal debt* of US citizens is greater than the gross national product of many nations of the world. Americans, many in Christendom included, borrow to maintain the pleasure-bent lifestyle we have presumptuously assumed is our due from God. That debt will collapse on us all before too long! When it does, will we then learn to repent?

With the sting of the Great Depression and the carrot of a pleasure-bent retirement that's been dangled before so many over the decades since the 1930's, generations have been seduced away from their family and social responsibilities. Older men and women could have achieved the pinnacle of loving service in the Kingdom of God. By making themselves available to guide their families and faith communities, they would have role-modeled for the younger generations the Kingdom of God at work.

Today, like Gideon's ephod (Judges 8:27) which became an idolatrous snare to Israel, government programs such as those begun in the 1930's have become social viruses. A virus comes alongside a cell and says, "I am just like you." Then the virus takes on the *responsibility* of the cell, ultimately overwhelming the cell and leading to its death.

Government social programs operate like viruses. Through *seeming benevolence*, government programs assume responsibilities for the people, ultimately removing Christians from their biblical mandate of exercising care for others.

As we shall see shortly, this was especially true in the move to make *compulsory public education* the law of the land. Sadly, so many Christian families have fallen for Satan's ploy.

Shall the throne of iniquity [corrupt government], which devises evil by law, have fellowship with You?

***They gather together against the life of the righteous, and condemn innocent blood.* (Psalms 94:20,21)**

Summary of Part 1

A battle rages all around you between God's KINGDOM vs. Satan's dominions. One represents the loving service of a devoted heart. The other relies on man's rebellion.

If you choose to put your trust in earthly government, you must give up your personal freedom to gain a shaky, worldly security. Governments purchase favor in order to stay in power. There is always a "ruling elite," even in a democratic society.

After David was anointed as God's choice for king, Saul felt threatened. Enlisting the support of his inner court, King Saul reminded them how *he* had shown them favor: "*Listen, men of Benjamin! Will the son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds?*" (1 Samuel 22:7).

Appealing to their self-centered framework, Saul dangled property and power before them in exchange for loyalty. It's no different today in the political arena. Positions of prestige and power are the currency in Satan's domains.

David's adultery with Bathsheba warranted the death penalty. Secretly, Joab was assigned by the king to see that Uriah, her husband and the king's faithful warrior, was killed. David's nasty little secret was not hidden from God, however. It's within His righteous character to faithfully make sure that sin's consequences stand as a warning to others. Earthly governments, on the other hand, do whatever is necessary to survive in power, regardless of morality and ethics.

If you reject the Theocracy that's offered by our Father, you are proclaiming to the heavens and to the world this rebellious message:

"We will serve the domains of Satan rather than the Kingdom of God. In this way we will be *like God*. We will look to the government as our provider and as the teacher of our children.

We will box God into religious services of our own choosing and design to please ourselves. We will *not* permit His Kingdom to rule us."

In God's KINGDOM you receive personal security through the freedom Jesus offers by His Spirit and in His commands. His Kingdom is the rule He extends *into your heart*. He sanctifies you from your old sinful nature by putting you into situations and encounters that stir you to make decisions to obey Him — to be more Christ-like.

The more your character resembles Jesus, the more freedom you have. Our Father yearns for the older generations to train up their children and grandchildren by word and deed to walk in His life. His Kingdom beckons grandparents, parents and supportive faith communities to raise *successors in the faith* who will live to trust and glorify Him.

The primary issue of accepting the Kingdom our Father offers is *relational trust* in Him. You need to *know Him* in the way He has revealed Himself in the Bible. If you make the decision to follow Jesus as LORD, you must forsake the idolatry of bringing Him down to the constructions of your own vain imagination. Make sure that *Who He is* and who you *want* Him to be match up!

- **What is your opinion of the form and integrity of the government of the United States?**

- **Describe in whom or what you place your trust. List the various ones in order of importance to you.**

- **What is your view of retirement? How does the concept of retirement align with God's Word?**

- **How are you using (or how would you use) your post-employment years for Kingdom purposes?**

- **Are you willing to ask our Lord to make known to you whatever changes He would have you make in your current lifestyle or time use?**
