

Genesis 28:10-22

We return this morning to our study on **Jacob's Ladder**; this is part 8 in our series. We are seeking to make application to the gospel and its vital and needful place in the church of the Living and True God. We are currently in our fourth point.

IV. Jacob's Discovery.

As we have seen, it pleased God to reveal Himself to Jacob in the grace of salvation, but when Jacob awoke from his dream up he knew God had met with him and shares his experience with God, which such a sober and fearful affect, "*And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. 17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*" Under this fourth point we have 4 sub-points.

- 1. The Presence of God in His House.**
- 2. The Place of God in His House.**
- 3. The Presiding of God in His House.**
- 4. The Passageway of God in His House.**

We have seen the first 3 points and now seek to end this section with the fourth point:

4. The Passageway of God in His House.

Under the point of The Presence of God in His House, we saw the importance of being sensitive and aware in regards to God's presence in our services. Then secondly, under The Place of God in His House we saw the importance of His blood bought Church giving God the Glory when they gathered to meet. We give God glory by the means of obedience in the preaching of the TRUTH because the Church of the Living God is the pillar and ground of truth. We saw last week on The Presiding of God in His Church; that God seeks to dwell with His people and in each economy whether in the Old Testament or the New Testament, God credentialed His presence and power in the Tabernacle and the Temple as the ordained means of worship for those particular eras. In our age or economy of course it's the Church and God credentialed His church on the day of Pentecost as the ordained instituted means for our time as He presides over His Church as HEAD!

Now, in this fourth point, The Passageway of God in His House, we again want to borrow a phrase from Jacob in Genesis 28: 16 & 17, "*And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. 17 And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*"

Jacobs awakes out of his dream and confesses the presence of God and in a reverential fear proclaims, "...*this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.*" What a proclamation, the house of God is the gate or passageway of heaven. This sounds cultic; heaven's gateway. Don't get nervous or worried; by no means are we going to preach that the church is the gateway to heaven. I'm just sharing what Jacob said. I take it to mean that when Jacob said, "...*this is none other but the house of God...*" that this was the dwelling place of God; it pleased God to meet and reveal Himself to Jacob. By, "...*and this is the gate of heaven,*" is the place where God meets with a sinner in the grace of salvation is but the gateway to heaven. Remember the ladder is a type of Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ is the door or if you wish the gateway to heaven. There is only one way to get to heaven and that is through Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12, "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*"

Now, the question that needs to be ask, is, how can this be applied to the Church of God? We saw last week that the church had its beginnings in the days of the ministry of Jesus Christ here on earth and that on the day of Pentecost, God empowered and endued, yea baptized His church with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Let us go back to a verse we read last week in Matthew 16:18, "*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" That is, Christ was in the process of starting or beginning His church as He was speaking to Peter because of the question He had asked them in verse 13 ff. But notice the words of Christ in verse 19 in regards to His church and its authority, "*And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*"

Our Lord here draws together the kingdom and the church, the importance and existence of both of them as they work together or cohabitate, that is, coexist together hand and hand to fulfill the purpose of God. One is visible and the other invisible and many are confuse in thinking that they are one and the same, that is, that the church and kingdom are but synonymous terms. One simple way to dispel this idea is to take the word church and insert kingdom and then take the word kingdom and insert the word church and it will not be long before you realize that they are not one and the same. Notice carefully that when men are brought before Jesus Christ for judgment, notice the reference is to the kingdom not the church, Matthew 7:21, "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*" The importance of entering the kingdom of God for salvation, but the entering or becoming a member in a local visible body is being in obedience to God, they were baptize and added to the church. In the Old Testament we saw that God was pleased to dwell with them in the Tabernacle and in the Temple, two glorious structures or houses of God, but being in the Tabernacle did not save them, it was an evidence of salvation, by means of obedience to God, being in the Temple of God did not save them either and being a member of any particular church does not save, we must be IN THE KINGDOM of God if we are to be saved. The church is visible and the kingdom of God is invisible, that is, one is physical and is spiritual. Now, there is a

sense that we can say that the church is the visible aspect of the kingdom or that the church is the spiritual aspect of the kingdom. In regards to the phrase, *"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven ..."* It does not mean we enter the kingdom through the church or that salvation lies in the church, no but that to the church was given authority in regards to the kingdom of God. Since the church is the visible representation of the kingdom, God has secured to her His authority to do kingdom work. Every kingdom has a government; the church's government like the kingdom of God is centered on the righteousness of God. In other words the main emphasis of the church is kingdom work, which is, being concern about the kingdom of God, which is, preaching about the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God was not established for the purpose of meeting the temporal needs of the people or for even solving the problems of the world. In other words the kingdom of God was not established for the social or political needs of the world, no, but for the salvation of sinners. I'm not saying that we should not care about the poor and things like, but first and foremost our purpose is to preach the kingdom of God.

In our Wednesday night studies on the book of Daniel, we finally spoke quite a bit in regards to the kingdom of God to which I don't want to repeat myself again this morning, except for clarity. I spoke on the on the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 2 and its interpretation, which was about the 4 powerful kingdoms of this world, the Babylonians, which was the head of gold of the statue. Then the Medes and the Persian which was the chest and arms of silver and then the mid section and thighs made of brass which typified Alexander the Great and the Grecian domain and then lastly the legs and feet of iron and clay which was the powerful Roman empire. It is in this context that Daniel makes a very powerful statement in Daniel 2:44, *"And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."* During the Roman empire God set up His prophesized kingdom. There is no question that there was much confusion regarding this kingdom. In the mindset of many Jews, they were thinking of an earthly, political ethnic Jewish kingdom that would rule in the kingdoms of this world but God established a spiritual kingdom that would rule in the hearts of men. It was a kingdom not based on RACE but upon GRACE, whose foundation and rule is the righteousness of God! It is so sad to see many confuse and be prejudice in their preconceive ideas of this kingdom. Some have gone to the extent of saying that because the Jews rejected Jesus Christ the kingdom was postpone. Therefore, God postponed the kingdom to some future 1000 year earthly reign of Christ. But 1000 years has a limited time affix to it, whereas the kingdom of God is: *"...a kingdom, **which shall never be destroyed**: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and **it shall stand for ever**."* In Daniel 7, Daniel's vision is equivalent to the statue of Daniel 2 notice what it says about the kingdom of God, Daniel 7:14, *"And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, **and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed**."* Dan. 7:18, *"But the saints of the most High **shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever**."* Dan. 7:22, *"Until the Ancient of days came, and*

judgment was given to the saints of the most High; **and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.**” Daniel 7:27, “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, **shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,** and all dominions shall serve and obey him.” Here we see the spiritual nature of this eternal kingdom! It is a present reality in that those, whom God saves, they POSSESS the Kingdom of GOD!

There were prophecies concerning the kingdom of God that would come, but when Malachi wrote his book, which is the last book of the Old Testament, said these final words in Mal.4:5 & 6, last two verses in the Old Testament, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: 6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” What a way to end the Old Testament. Then there were 400 years of silence. Those prolonged four centuries of profuse darkness that hung over Israel, was finally broken by the voice of that prepared messenger whom Isaiah said, “The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain: 5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.” Isa.40:3-5. John the Baptist is the one Isaiah prophesized about and when the fullness of time was come, he who was the last of the Old Testament prophets who was also the forerunner of the messiah proclaimed with heavens authority in thundering power, the KINGDOM OF GOD IS AT HAND! The burden of John the Baptist’s message is expressed in astonishing and surprising words in the beginning of the 3rd chapter of Matthew’s gospel, in verses 1 - 3, “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, 2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. 3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.” This message was so profound and deep that all four gospels carry this message and it’s the only event dated in the New Testament with particularity. Notice what is said in Luke chapter 3:1 - 3, “Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, 2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. 3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” Thus, without a shadow of doubt it brought forth a new era in history. The fullness of time had arrived and the long expected Messiah would visit the Jews and the Gentiles as God would be manifest in the flesh with the message of salvation; that is the good news to all the ends of the earth. Yes it came to the Jews first and then to the uttermost parts of the earth. Notice how Mark begins his gospel in Mark 1:1-5; 14 & 15. Both Christ and the Baptist were in agreement regarding the essence of the kingdom of God, IT WAS AT HAND! That is, to bring near, to draw near or to approach, in other words, the KINGDOM OF GOD HAD COME! It is here now, was the message of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. The kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven are synonymous terms; they are one and the same. Quickly look at the sermon of the mount which is the kingdom sermon and in Matthew 5:3 it says, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is

the kingdom of heaven.” Turn to Luke 6:20, “And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.” Do your own study and you will see that these terms are one and the same. From here on now, the message would be; the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom and the necessity of being in, or entering the kingdom of God. Matt.3:1 & 2; 4:12-17, 23 -25; Matt.10:5-7. The word kingdom used 155 in the New Testament, 124 of those times it is used in the 4 gospels. This shows the preeminence it had in the preaching of the gospel. Preaching the kingdom of God is preaching the gospel of the kingdom. The Jews were looking for a physical, political ethnic Jewish kingdom, but the kingdom of God is spiritual, 1 Cor.15:50, “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ...” Again, there are many that believe that the kingdom of God was postponed because the Jews rejected Jesus and therefore an earthly kingdom will be set up sometime future in the 1000 year millennium. Many of this persuasion also believe that when Jesus Christ and John the Baptist said the kingdom was at hand, it did not mean it was at hand but that the kingdom was in the future. Turn to Matthew 26:17 & 18; now how foolish would it be for me to say, Jesus meant that He would partake of the passover and die a few 1000’s years in the future. Matthew 26: 45 & 46, again how foolish would it be to say that Judas would betray Him a few 1000’s years from now. At hand, meant at hand, it meant at the present moment; that is NOW! Jesus came preaching that the kingdom of God is here, it is now HERE! Did Christ have an interest in a physical kingdom or a kingdom of this world? Notice His precise words to Pontius Pilate in John 18:33-40, John 18:36, “Jesus answered, **My kingdom is not of this world:** if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: **but now is my kingdom not from hence.**”

Now, lest you think I am making up or making much about the teaching of the rejecting of Christ and about the postponement of the kingdom of God. Consider these quotes among the many who really believe this. This is view is predominantly Dispensational Premillennialism to which the Word of God clearly refutes; I know this because I was once a dispensational pre-mil and I use to teach this: (The following quotes are from, ‘His Truth is Marching On,’ by Ralph Woodrow, page 67)

- John Rice in his book, ‘Christ’s Literal Reign,’ on page 12 says, “The Jews rejected Christ their King, and the kingdom was postponed.”
- William Blackstone in his book, ‘Jesus is Coming,’ on page 87 says, “He would have set up the Kingdom, but they rejected and crucified Him.”
- Clarence Larkin, ‘Dispensational Truth,’ page 85, “God...made the attempt to set His kingdom on earth” but because the Jews rejected it, so “the kingdom has been withdrawn” until the second coming.
- M.R. De Haan, ‘The Second Coming of Jesus,’ on page 98, “The kingdom of heaven is the reign of heaven’s King on earth. This Jesus offered to the nation of Israel when he came the first time, but they rejected it and he went to the cross.”

As though God had plan A and plan B, if plan A failed then plan would come into action, how crazy is this when Christ came for the purpose of dying on the cross for

sinner, it was not some plan B because the Jews rejected Him. As a matter of fact over 2000 years later and the Jews still reject Jesus Christ as their awaited Messiah! When Christ said the kingdom of God was at hand, it meant it was inaugurated and became the focal point of the preaching of the gospel, that is, the KINGDOM OF GOD HAS COME! Look at Matt. 12:27-30. Yes, Jesus was an extremist! You were either with Him or against Him and guess what, 2000 years and it the same thing, you are either with Christ or you are against Him! Luke 11:19-23.

Now, the nature of the kingdom of God is that it is spiritual, though here on earth, yet it is invisible and it is also universal. It encompasses all the save of any given time. Luke 17:20-25. (Here in verse 25 would have been a good place to say that the kingdom was postpone and yet future). Interesting to note that in John 6:15, they sought to make Him king, but Jesus Christ rejected the notion of an earthly kingdom. The Kingdom of God is spiritual, Rom14:17, (Rom.15:4, 8-13, a direct quote from Isaiah which again they put in the future).

Now a kingdom is ruled by a King who sits upon a throne. A kingdom has a king, a kingdom has a domain, which in this case it is spiritual and a kingdom has subjects and in this case all the save people of God throughout the whole world are the people or subjects of the kingdom, that is, citizens of the kingdom of God. Luke 1:31-33. There is a kingdom, which has a king for its ruler, has a world wide dominion and has subjects who seek to submit to their king. Its government is righteousness, that is, the righteousness of God. Look at Isaiah 9:6 & 7. Notice the clear words of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Sermon of the Mount, Matt.6:33, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."* The problem with 21st century Christianity is twofold, the preachers don't about the kingdom of God, they speak about everything under the sun, and kingdom preaching suffers. Which leads to the second problem, Christian are therefore not interested in seeking the kingdom of God first and His righteousness, because they are so busy seeking out all kinds of inventions, which is but the worshipping of their own hands. This why we seek to preach the gospel of Christ, that is, preaching the kingdom of God and its necessity in our everyday life. Let me ask you this, do you think the gospel or the kingdom of God is only for the lost? If you answer yes, you have been duped. The preaching of the gospel and the preaching of the kingdom of God is important for the saints of God too, very important and very needful, this is why Jesus Christ, in His 40 post-resurrection days was constantly speaking about the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, Acts 1:3 & 4. The pattern for the New Testament Church is the book of the Acts. It begins and ends with the subject of the kingdom of God. Acts 28:23-31 and in between the same topic and subject, Acts 8:12, 14:22, 19:8 and 20:25. How long is the church to be occupied with the kingdom of God? Matthew 24:14.

Philip Mauro in his book, 'The Church, The Churches, The Kingdom,' says this regarding the preaching of Christ and the Baptist about the kingdom of God being at hand, *"Its distinctive feature being that God has now a Kingdom on earth, into which a way of*

admission has, through God's wondrous grace, been made available for men of all nations, kindred's, tongues and tribes."

Thus, the church has a very important mission in being the executor of the kingdom of God, though I believe the church and the kingdom are distinct, I believe that for this economy, one cannot exist without the other. Both are important in the purpose of God for this final age or economy. Therefore, there is a sense that the church is the gateway to heaven, for unto her are entrusted the keys to the kingdom of God. It is of utmost importance that the church finds herself doing kingdom work and not get so consumed with the pragmatism of our day, but to preach about the king of this kingdom and compelling and admonishing sinners of the importance of entering into the kingdom of God by repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Again, I want to make sure that we understand that salvation is not found in the church, but that salvation is found in the kingdom of God. This was the message of Christ to Nicodemus in John 3:3-8. This is also the meaning in Col.1:12-14. This is a supernatural work of God, but it does not remove the responsibility of seeking the kingdom of heaven. If you are outside Christ this morning, you must press into the kingdom and take it by force. Matthew 11:10-15. Turn to Luke 13:22-29. Many Jews thought that just because they were Jews they were assured of heaven. There is a preacher that still believes this, John Hagee from Cornerstone believes in a double covenant, whereby, the gospel does not have to be preached to the Jews because they are already in a special covenant with God. Then why did Jesus Christ preach the gospel to them during His ministry on earth? Paul, Peter and others preached to the Jews on the importance of repenting and believing the gospel. Notice the rebuke of John the Baptist to those Jews who had this type of mentality, Luke 3:8.

One of the reasons the church is the executor of the kingdom of God and the keys have been entrusted to her is because, God took the kingdom away from the Jews and gave to the church to bring forth fruit. Matthew 21:33-43 in the parable of the wicked husbandmen, notice what Christ says. Thus, we have a very important responsibility as a New Testament church in being the executor of God's kingdom; we must concern ourselves with the preaching of the KINGDOM OF GOD! We must exhort and compel all to enter into God's kingdom, by repentance and believing the gospel of Christ. Some (not all) of the aspects of the kingdom of God are following:

- The Kingdom of God is everlasting. Dan. 2, 4 & 7.
- The Kingdom of God is universal. Luke 13:28, 29.
- The Kingdom of God is spiritual. I Cor.15:50, Rom.14:17, Luke 17:20 & 21.
- The Kingdom of God is with power. I Cor.4:20.
- The Kingdom of God is unshakable. Heb.12:28.
- The Kingdom of God must be entered through a spiritual birth: John 3:3-8, Col.1:13.
- The keys of the Kingdom of God were given to the Church: Matt.16:19.
- The Church must be concerned about Kingdom work.

- *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matt.6:33.*

Though, the church might have the keys to the kingdom, the Lord Jesus Christ has the most important keys, Revelation 1:18, *“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”* Thus, you better bow to king of kings and Lord of Lords, Phil.2:9-11, ***“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*** (Keys in 2 places only Matt and Rev)

Sing: Isaiah 9:6