

LESSON 4

The New Testament Kingdom An Organization

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The New Testament Kingdom of Christ, of which Jesus is founder, law-giver and ruler, is an organized institution. Jesus Christ, the Messiah, is the supreme King and Law-giver. The subjects are His obedient disciples who observe His commandments and ordinances. The inspired word of Jesus Christ, as revealed, in the New Testament, contains the only rule of faith and practice for the Kingdom of God, to be observed by His churches as executives. This organic Kingdom of Christ includes the sum total of the local, scriptural churches. According to the above facts, this New Testament Kingdom is of necessity an organic government.

Concerning this Kingdom the prophet says; "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 forever." Dan. 2:44.

Jesus Christ, as the "God of Heaven," long after the establishment of the Jewish kingdom, set up His own organic Kingdom, which is an "Everlasting Kingdom".

That this New Testament Kingdom of Christ is an organized government, is sustained by the following proofs:

First: This New Testament Kingdom of Christ is an organized government, because it was set up-built, or established. The imaginary, unorganized, invisible kingdom could not properly be said to have been set up. The setting up of this Kingdom was peculiarly the work of Christ. It was set up and fully established, during the personal ministry of Christ on earth. The building of this organic Kingdom was not accomplished in one day.

Second: This New Testament government of Christ is proved to be an organic Kingdom, because men and women are translated into it. Paul, of God the Father says: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son." Col. 1:13. It would be hard to conceive of the idea of persons being translated into an unorganized, invisible kingdom.

Again, Paul says: "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit." 1 Cor. 12:13. (Revised Version.) Those who were in the Spirit of God, born of the Spirit-were baptized into the organic Kingdom and Church of Christ. The local Church being a component part of the Kingdom, that which introduces into the Church, at the same time introduces the person into this Kingdom. The fact that baptism, which is a visible, outward, public act of obedience to Christ, introduces persons into His Kingdom proves it to be an organic government.

The Savior said: "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men: for

ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." Matt. 23-13. It would hardly be proper to say that these enemies of Christ refused to enter, and shut up an unorganized Kingdom.

Third: The New Testament government of Christ on earth is an organized Kingdom, because it is the anti-type and successor to the Jewish organized political kingdom of Israel. The throne or government of Christ was to be the fulfillment and perpetuation of David's kingly government. As David was a type of Christ, so the organic kingdom of David was a type of the organic Kingdom of Christ.

The angel said of the infant Jesus, that; "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His Kingdom there shall be no end." Luke 1:32-33. This important passage certainly teaches the establishment of an organic Kingdom - the anti-type of the kingdom of David.

Fourth: This New Testament government of Christ is proved to be a real organic visible kingdom from the fact that the execution of its laws and ordinances was committed to the Churches. This executive authority in the Kingdom was committed to the Church, to bind and loose on earth. The Savior asked His disciples the opinion of men concerning Himself. Some thought that He was John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

Then the Savior put the question directly to His disciples saying: "But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. 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. 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." Matt. 16:16-19.

It will be observed that the question was propounded to the disciples in the plural. Peter answered for them all. And in addressing Peter, the Savior, through him, addressed them all. The keys of the Kingdom of Heaven were to be given to these disciples as a Church organization. These keys were not given to Peter alone, as Roman Catholics and others teach. The same key power referred to in the 19th verse, is explained in the 18th chapter.

The Savior said: "Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, if he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth

shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matt. 18:16-18.

The same key power of binding and loosing on earth, which is recorded in the sixteenth chapter and nineteenth verse, is given in the plural number to the disciples as a Church. In the eighteenth chapter Jesus says: "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Also it will be observed that this key power is applied to the exclusion of the offending member, who fails to hear the Church. It is absurd and blasphemous to claim that sinful men have the keys to open and shut heaven above, to admit or reject persons. It is equally absurd to contend that the keys of the supposed invisible Kingdom of Christ on earth are placed in the hands of men, to admit or reject applicants. We understand the key power simply to mean the authority to receive members, according to the Scriptures, into the Kingdom of Christ on earth, exclude unworthy members, and to perform such other business pertaining to that Kingdom as may be lawful for a Church to do. If a Church fails to act in accordance with the Scriptures, she fails to use the keys, and such action is not binding in heaven. God, in heaven, only sanctions such actions as are in harmony with His word. This important fact, that the keys of the Kingdom to bind and loose on earth are given to the Church, proves that this New Testament government is an organized Kingdom. Though Christ Himself rules as King, His local Churches are appointed to execute His laws and administer His ordinances.

Fifth: The New Testament government is proved to be a real organized Kingdom from the fact that the "Lord's Supper," which is a local Church ordinance, was appointed to be observed in the Kingdom of Christ.

The Savior says: "Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a Kingdom as My Father hath appointed unto Me; That ye may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Luke 22:28 - 30.

It is hardly possible to conceive of one eating and drinking the real visible elements, bread and wine, as a Church ordinance, in the supposed invisible kingdom of Christ. As the "Lord's Supper" is a public monumental ordinance in the Kingdom of Christ on earth, that government must of necessity be a real organic kingdom.

Sixth: Another argument is drawn from the fact that the government of Christ has suffered persecution. The Savior says: "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John." Matt. 11: 12-13.

Surely, an invisible, unorganized, so-called kingdom, could not suffer violence, and be taken by force. The interpretation, that men get religion by force, seems to us absurd and foolish. John the Baptist, the officer extraordinary of the Kingdom and the harbinger of the King, was taken by force and suffered violence. Jesus Christ, the King Himself, with His disciples, met violent opposition from

the Jewish people, at every step of their ministry. "He came to His own, but His own received Him not." "He was despised and rejected of men." Finally He was taken by force to suffer a violent death. The fact that Christ's Kingdom on earth suffered violence shows that it is a real, visible, organic kingdom. Many other passages of scripture may be cited to prove positively the organic character of the New Testament Kingdom of Christ, but the foregoing will suffice.