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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 31 NUMBER 12

KINGDOM OR CHURCH?

Allen Webster



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It may surprise you to learn that the church of the Bible does not have a proper name. By definition church (*ekklesia*) means “the called out” and refers to those who have been called out of the world into fellowship with God, by faith and obedience to the gospel (Hebrews 5:8–9; 2 Thessalonians 1:7–9).

KINGDOM REFERS TO THE CHURCH'S FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The church is pictured in different ways, according to which aspect one is considering. It is called a body when one is considering the unity of its members. It is called a vineyard when one considers it is the place where God’s servants work to grow the fruit of the Spirit. It is called a family when one considers its members’ relationship to the Father and each other. It is called an army when one recalls that it engages Satan’s forces in a to-the-death battle for the souls of men. When its government is considered, it is called a kingdom because it is a monarchy (ruled by a monarch or king).

This should not be confusing: I am a man, a son, a husband, a father, an

American, a taxpayer, a fan, an employee, a writer, and a Christian. Scripture refers to the church by several designations. Consider these descriptions:

- the churches of Christ (Romans 16:16).
- the church of the Lord (Acts 20:28 ASV).
- the church of God (1 Corinthians 1:2).
- the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12).
- the church of the living God (1 Timothy 3:15).
- the church of the firstborn (Hebrews 12:23).

THE TERMS ARE USED INTERCHANGEABLY

Church and kingdom are used interchangeably in the New Testament. Jesus said, “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 16:18–19). Obviously, He is talking about the same institution in back-to-back sentences, much like I might say,

"You may borrow my van. Here are the keys to the Honda."

Jesus promised to build His church and gave Peter the keys (terms of admission) of the kingdom. If the church and kingdom were different, Peter would have no right to use the keys of the kingdom on the church. It would be like using your Ford keys to try to drive my Honda.

If the kingdom has not yet been established, as many teach, then Peter lived the rest of his natural life and never got to use the keys at all. Why would Jesus give him useless keys? The kingdom or church was established on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus Christ. On that day, Peter used the keys of the kingdom to let three thousand people into the door of the church (Acts 2:38–47).

THE KINGDOM AND CHURCH HAVE THE SAME IDENTIFYING MARKS

It is hard to miss that the institutions are the same when carefully reading the New Testament. Consider:

- The church and the kingdom have the same head. Christ is the head of the church (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:23) and He is also the King of

the kingdom (Acts 17:7; Revelation 1:5; 1 Timothy 6:15).

- Entrance to the church and the kingdom requires the same conditions. Jesus said, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). People are born into the kingdom by being baptized in water according to the Spirit's gospel. On Pentecost the Spirit led sinners, through the apostles' message, to believe, repent, and be baptized for remission of sins (Acts 2:38). They were then added to the church (2:47). The same process by which a person entered the kingdom also added him to the church.
- The kingdom and the church have the same subjects. Paul said that the saints had been translated into the kingdom (Colossians 1:13), which was also "the body, the church" (1:18).
- The church and the kingdom have the same seed. Jesus spoke of the word of God as being the "word of the kingdom" (Matthew 13:19) that produces subjects of the kingdom. When the same word was preached in Corinth (1 Corinthians 15:1–3), many of the Corinthians heard it, believed it, and were baptized (Acts 18:8). Paul addressed them as the "church of God" (1 Corinthians 1:2).

If the church and the kingdom are not the same, then one seed was producing two different plants, which is a contradiction to both

nature and revelation (Genesis 1:11; Galatians 6:7–8).

- They have the same laws. Peter wrote, "His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3). If either the kingdom or the church had one thing that pertained to life or godliness which the other did not have, then the one lacking it would be imperfect, and Peter's statement would not be true of both. Hence, they must have the same laws.

Someone designed a helpful chart comparing the identifying marks of the kingdom and the church, and in so doing, showed they are the same institution.

IDENTIFYING MARKS—KINGDOM/CHURCH

1. Beginning place/date (Isaiah 2:2–3; Acts 2:1–47)
2. Boundary of territory (Daniel 2:44; Mark 16:15)
3. Owner of institution (John 18:36; Matthew 16:18)
4. Ruler of inhabitants (1 Timothy 6:15; Ephesians 5:23)
5. Governing law (Isaiah 2:3; Acts 2:38–47)
6. Christ gave keys (Matthew 16:19; Matthew 16:18)
7. Terms of entrance (John 3:5; Acts 2:38–47)
8. Membership (Colossians 1:13; Colossians 1:2)
9. Its glory and exaltation (Isaiah 2:2–3; Ephesians 3:21)
10. Memorial supper (Matthew 26:29; 1 Corinthians 11:20)
11. Reward of faithful (Matthew 25:34; 1 Corinthians 15:58)
12. Time of deliverance (1 Corinthians 15:24; 1 Thessalonians 4:16)

Since things equal to the same thing are equal to each other, it is easy to conclude that the kingdom and the church are the same institution.

Christ invites you to become a member of the greatest institution on earth (Matthew 11:28–30). Why not take Him up on it?

"Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

MATTHEW 25:34



JESUS—Whose Son Is He?

“What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?” Jesus asked these questions of some Pharisees during the last week of His life. Their answer to Him was, “The son of David” (Matthew 22:42). It is interesting that Jesus was the “Son of” at least five people.

First, Jesus was the Son of Mary. Before Mary had physical relations with Joseph, she conceived a child by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:18, 20, 25). God sent Gabriel to her with this message: “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus” (Luke 1:31). Thus the Bible identifies her as “Mary the mother of Jesus” (Acts 1:14). She was the chosen vessel through whom the Messiah came into the world (Isaiah 7:14; Galatians 4:4).

Jesus was the Son of man. Jesus asked His disciples, “Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?” (Matthew 16:13). This expression was a favorite of Jesus and simply pointed out His humanity and humility. Since He had an earthly mother, there was a human side to Him. He became flesh and dwelt among men (John 1:14); He came “in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7). Since those He came to redeem were “flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same” (Hebrews 2:14). He temporarily became a man in order to offer an unblemished sacrifice to save sinners.

Jesus was the Son of God. Gabriel told Mary that she would have a Son, and the “Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). Consider the opening words of the book of Mark: “The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God” (Mark 1:1). How did Jesus respond when the high priest asked Him point blank, “Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?” (Mark 14:61). He said, “I am” (14:62). “Son of man” emphasizes His humanity; “Son of God” emphasizes His deity. Jesus possesses the nature of God—He is part of “the Godhead” (Colossians 2:9). On numerous occasions, the Bible even refers to Jesus as “God” (John 1:1;

Hebrews 1:8). That does not mean that Jesus is God the Father, but that He possesses the same divine nature.

Jesus was the Son of David. The Jews referred to the Messiah as “the Son of David” (Matthew 22:42). They knew that the prophecies of the Old Testament made it clear that the Messiah would be the descendant of David (2 Samuel 7:12–14; Psalm 132:11; Isaiah 11:1). The very first verse in the New Testament identifies Jesus as this “son of David.” “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David” (Matthew 1:1). Paul added that Jesus Christ our Lord “was born of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Romans 1:3); cf. 2 Timothy 2:8). Peter’s proclamation affirms: “Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David . . . Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne” (Acts 2:29–30). Prophecy made, prophecy fulfilled—the promised Messiah must be an offspring of David and sit on David’s throne. Jesus came as the descendant of King David, and He now sits on his throne, ruling over spiritual Israel, the church (Luke 1:31–33).

Jesus was the Son of Abraham. Matthew 1:1 again says, “The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.” God promised Abraham that in him all families of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3; cf. 22:18). This was nothing less than a promise that through his offspring, the Messiah would come into the world. To say that Jesus was “the Son of Abraham” means that He was Abraham’s descendant and the fulfillment of this Old Testament promise. Galatians 3:16 makes this plain: “Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many; but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ.”

Each expression is unique, pointing out a special aspect of Christ.

—Roger D. Campbell, Cleveland, TN

Everything I Needed to Know About Life I Learned from a Jigsaw Puzzle

1. When things are not going well, take a break. Everything will look different when you return (cf. Mark 6:31).
2. Be sure to look at the big picture (John 4:35). Getting hung up on the little pieces only leads to frustration.
3. Do not force a fit (Philippians 2:4).
4. Perseverance pays off. Every important puzzle went together bit by bit, piece by piece (Exodus 23:29).
5. When one spot stops working, move to another (Ecclesiastes 11:6). But be sure to come back later (see #4).
6. The creator of the puzzle gave you the picture as a guidebook (2 Peter 1:3).
7. Variety is the spice of life. It is the different colors and patterns that make the puzzle interesting (Acts 10:34–35).
8. Working together with friends and family makes any task fun (Nehemiah 3:1–32).
9. Establish the border first. Boundaries give a sense of security and order (Proverbs 22:6).
10. Do not be afraid to try different combinations (Luke 5:4). Some matches are surprising.
11. Take time often to celebrate your successes—even little ones (Philippians 4:4).
12. Anything worth doing takes time and effort. A great puzzle cannot be rushed (Galatians 6:9). —As printed in Mer-

cEmail, Steve Higginbotham, Editor

God’s Plan for Saving Man

Divine Love: John 3:16

God’s Grace: Ephesians 2:8

Christ’s Blood: Romans 5:9

Holy Spirit’s Word: 1 Corinthians 2:12–13

Sinner’s Faith: Acts 16:31

Sinner’s Repentance: Luke 13:3

Sinner’s Confession: Romans 10:10

Sinner’s Baptism: Acts 22:16

Christian’s Love: Matthew 22:37

Christian’s Work: James 2:24

Christian’s Hope: Romans 8:24

Christian’s Endurance: Revelation 2:10

Watch
on youtube





Don't Just Tell Her You Love Her

Tell her why you love her. She knows you love her; she craves to know why. Adding "because" at the end of "I love you" increases intimacy in your marriage. "I love you because you're so unselfish."

"Say so."

PSALM 107:2

Dads Matter

According to Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, a father's involvement with a child increases the child's IQ, the child's motivation to learn, and the child's self-confidence. In addition, children with involved dads are more likely to develop a sense of humor as well as an "inner excitement."

"Fathers ... bring them up..."

EPHESIANS 6:4

Smile

The Sunday school teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Johnny interrupted: "My mommy looked back once, while she was driving," he announced triumphantly, "and she turned into a telephone pole!"

Rejoice with joy unspeakable.

1 PETER 1:8



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Burnt Biscuits

When I was a child, my mom liked to make breakfast food for dinner every now and then. And I remember one night in particular when she had made breakfast after a long, hard day at work. On that evening so long ago, my mom placed a plate of eggs, sausage, and extremely burned biscuits in front of my dad. I remember waiting to see if anyone noticed! Yet all my dad did was reach for his biscuit, smile at my mom, and ask me how my day was at school. I don't remember what I told him that night, but I do remember watching him smear butter and jelly on that biscuit and eat every bite!

When I got up from the table that evening, I remember hearing my mom apologize to my dad for burning the biscuits. And I'll never forget what he said: "Honey, I love burned biscuits."

Later when I went to kiss Daddy good night, I asked him if he really liked his biscuits burned. He wrapped me in his arms and said, "Your Momma put in a hard day at work today and she's real tired. And besides—a little burnt biscuit never hurt anyone!"

You know, life is full of imperfect things ... and imperfect people. I'm not the best at hardly anything, and I forget birthdays and anniversaries just like everyone else. What I've learned over the years is that learning to accept each other's faults—and choosing to celebrate each other's differences—is one of the most important keys to creating a healthy, growing, and lasting relationship.

And that's my prayer for you today. That you will learn to take the good, the bad, and the ugly parts of your life and lay them at the feet of God. Because in the end, He's the only One who will be able to give you a relationship where a burnt biscuit isn't a deal-breaker!

We could extend this to any relationship. In fact, understanding is the base of any relationship, be it a husband-wife or parent-child or friendship. Someone said, "Don't put the key to your happiness in someone else's pocket—keep it in your own."

So please pass me a biscuit, and yes, the burnt one will do just fine. —Author Unknown,

submitted by Frances Shipp, Weaver High School, Weaver, Alabama

Just for Fun Word Search

Find the words in blue.
Words go in any direction.

"To those who have **obtained** like **precious faith** with us by the **righteousness** of our **God** and **Savior Jesus Christ: Grace** and **peace** be multiplied to you in the **knowledge** of God and of **Jesus our Lord**, as His **divine** power has given to us all things that pertain to **life** and **godliness**, through the knowledge of **Him** who called us by **glory** and **virtue**, by which have been given to us exceedingly **great** and precious **promises**."

— 2 PETER 1:1-4

E	A	Y	J	D	P	R	O	M	I	S	E	S	R	F	U
U	Z	Z	Z	E	R	M	N	I	A	S	Q	Z	U	A	M
T	M	W	K	N	R	L	X	V	T	E	L	O	R	D	Y
R	B	M	K	I	N	L	I	L	S	N	K	E	N	V	Y
I	A	Y	G	A	E	O	U	U	I	S	V	F	F	K	R
V	H	E	U	T	R	C	O	U	R	U	V	E	I	J	O
L	T	G	W	B	W	O	S	F	H	O	L	I	F	E	L
T	I	D	X	O	S	U	O	I	C	E	R	P	F	Y	G
T	A	E	R	G	S	S	M	A	P	T	N	H	S	Z	K
T	F	L	Z	E	Q	Q	L	G	R	H	U	I	B	N	J
R	T	W	J	L	E	C	A	R	G	G	O	D	V	S	G
P	G	O	D	L	I	N	E	S	S	I	O	C	V	I	P
R	K	N	S	I	U	X	J	K	F	R	N	F	Y	X	D
D	I	K	B	N	P	E	A	C	E	T	Y	D	U	Y	Q

What is the Duration of Hell?



It is common in today's religious world to reject the biblical teaching of the reality of hell. Many claim that the old "eternal hell fire" is out of character for a loving God, and that when this life is over, the unsaved will simply cease to exist.

This is an appealing doctrine to many because it eliminates the possibility of punishment for sin. However, Jesus said that the wicked "will go away into everlasting punishment" (Matthew 25:46). Paul wrote that those who do not know God and refuse to obey Him, "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

Hell, the ultimate abode of the wicked, is translated from the Greek word *Gehenna*. It differs from *Hades*, another Greek word rendered as "hell" in the King James Version. Hades is the abode of all the

dead, righteous and unrighteous, before the resurrection. The literal Gehenna, from which hell is derived, was a narrow gorge near Jerusalem that represented the worst of Jewish history. Years earlier, they stained this valley with the blood of their own innocent children offered in sacrifice to the idol, Baal. In Christ's day, Gehenna was a continually burning garbage dump, the name of which He appropriated to describe the final abode of the wicked.

The Scriptures often describe hell as a place of unending punishment. Jesus spoke of the day when His angels would gather those who do iniquity and "cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 13:42). John described hell, saying, "The smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night" (Revelation 14:11). Other passages

describe hell as "outer darkness" (Matthew 8:12), "the furnace of fire" (Matthew 13:42), and "eternal fire" (Jude 7).

Jude said that Sodom and Gomorrah, the wicked cities that had "given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire" (Jude 1:7). The term *eternal* literally means "always being." Hell is just as eternal as heaven (Matthew 25:46). If the fires of hell burn out, then the light of heaven will go out on the same day. The good news is that hell can be avoided! Jesus died that we might be saved. We can all obey His gospel and dwell in heaven forever. —Bob Prichard, P. O. Box 3071, Oxford, AL 36203

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Bible Quiz

VOLUME 31:12

Send us your answers (address on front) to receive a free Bible bookmark. We will grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "Jesus by the Numbers" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____
Address: _____
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Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 31:10 *New Testament Bible Characters*: 1. Barabbas (Matthew 27:21); 2. Barnabas (Acts 4:36); 3. Luke (Colossians 4:14); 4. Apollos (Acts 18:24–26); 5. Barjesus (Acts 13:6–11); 6. Nicodemus (John 3:1–5); 7. Peter (Acts 2:1, 14); 8. Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46–52); 9. Lydia (Acts 16:14–15); 10. Lazarus (Luke 16:20); 11. Mary (Matthew 1:18); 12. Gamaliel (Acts 22:3); 13. Judas (Matthew 27:3–5); 14. Martha (Luke 10:38–42); 15. Pilate (Matthew 27:2); 16. Herod (Matthew 2:16); 17. Philip (Acts 8:35); 18. Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57–58); 19. Andrew (John 1:40–42); 20. John the Baptist (Matthew 14:6–10); 21. Diotrophes (3 John 1:9); 22. Tertullus (Acts 24:1–2); 23. Trophimus (2 Timothy 4:20); 24. Malchus (John 18:10–11); 25. Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1).

V. 31:11 *The Book of Esther*: 1. Ahasuerus (Esther 1:1); 2. 127 (1:1); 3. Shushan (Susa) (1:2); 4. Vashti (1:19); 5. Kingdom (2:2–4); 6. Hadassah (2:7); 7. Mordecai (2:7); 8. Benjamin (2:5); 9. Hegai (2:8–9); 10. Seventh (2:16); 11. Bigthan and Teresh (2:21–23); 12. Hammedatha (3:1); 13. Bow or pay homage (3:2); 14. Pur (3:7); 15. Ring (3:10–12); 16. Put to death (4:11); 17. This (4:14); 18. Fast (4:16); 19. Golden scepter (5:2); 20. Banquet (5:4); 21. Fifty (5:14); 22. Book of the chronicles (6:1); 23. Horse (6:8–11).

The Sermon on the Mount

Directions: Please find answers in Matthew 5:6, 8, 12, 14, 28, 32, 35, 39, 44; 6:6, 10, 22, 24, 26, 28–29, 33; 7:3, 6, 14, 15, 17, 21, 24, 29. Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

1. The pure in heart shall _____ God.
2. We are to hunger after _____.
3. The persecuted have a great reward waiting in _____.
4. The earth is God's _____.
5. The lamp of the body is the _____.
6. Who was compared to the lilies of the field? _____.
7. What should you not throw before swine? _____.
8. Which gate leads to life? _____.
9. A good tree brings forth _____ fruit.
10. What is in the hypocrite's eye? _____.
11. A city set on a hill cannot be _____.
12. A man who lusts has committed _____ in his heart.
13. Whoever marries a woman that is divorced commits _____.
14. What city is the "city of the great King"? _____.
15. _____ your enemies.
16. We must seek first the _____ of God and his _____.
17. Beware of false _____.
18. To enter the kingdom of heaven, we must _____ the Father's will.
19. The wise man built his house upon the _____.
20. Jesus taught with _____, and not as the scribes.
21. We should pray in our _____ instead of on street corners.
22. Your will be done on _____ as it is in _____.
23. No man can serve two _____.
24. Who feeds the birds? _____.
25. When someone smites my cheek, what should I do? _____.

CHRISTIANITY & SCIENCE AGREE

"I believe . . . that the soul of man is immortal and will be treated with justice in another life respecting its conduct in this." —Benjamin Franklin

For years, many have erroneously thought science and religion contradict. It is true that many speculations and hypotheses of scientific men conflict with Bible truths. However, nothing scientifically found or proved differs from Bible facts. Yet so many—even learned people—think that science and the Bible are incompatible.

It was refreshing to read an article from one of the greatest scientists of the last generation. The article was entitled "Immortality" and was published in *This Week Magazine*, January 24, 1960. The

author was Dr. Wernher Von Braun; at that time, he was director of the Army Ballistic Missile agency.

This world-renowned scientist maintained that survival is based on ethics, and not atoms. He scoffed at the idea that science had made religious ideas old fashioned. In fact, Dr. Braun said two factors move us: the last judgment, and faith in an immortal soul.

May I quote him? "I think science has a real surprise for the skeptics. Science, for instance, tells us that nothing in nature, not even the tiniest particle, can disappear without a trace . . . Nature does not know extinction. All it knows is transformation. Now if God applies this fundamental principle to the most minute and

insignificant parts of his universe, doesn't it make sense to assume that he applies it also to the masterpiece of his creation—the human soul? I think it does. And everything science has taught me—and continues to teach me—strengthens my belief in the continuity of our spiritual existence after death. Nothing disappears without a trace."

Young people, real men in science realize how little is known. They realize as they study this universe how infinite it really is. Christianity has been tried but not found wanting.

*"May you be blessed by the Lord,
Who made heaven and earth."*

PSALM 115:15

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I want to learn more about the Bible!

If you knew for sure that the religious path you are on would not get you to heaven, would you change? If there was the possibility of a doubt, would you investigate? Why not request a personal Bible study today?

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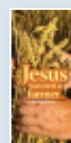
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- ☐ Where to Turn When There's Nowhere to Turn
- ☐ Don't Stop in Haran
- ☐ You're Not Going to the Prom?



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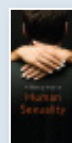
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☐ Jesus Was Not a Farmer...



☐ The Pros and Cons of Starting the Smoking Habit



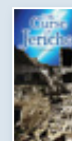
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☐ Beating the Devil at His Own Game



☐ My Offering



☐ The Curse of Jericho

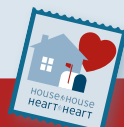


☐ Pull the Weeds, Water the Flowers



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VOLUME 31:12



Chapter to Chapter 2 KINGS

This chart is part of a memory system for learning the key people, events, topics, and verses of all 929 Old Testament chapters.

INTRODUCTION

Second Kings continues the history of the divided kingdom from the ministries of Elijah and Elisha through the fall of Samaria and Jerusalem. Traditionally connected with Jeremiah, it covers roughly 850–560 B.C. Major themes include prophetic authority, covenant faithfulness, reform, idolatry, judgment, and exile.

CHAPTER/TOPICS

1. Elijah calls down fire from heaven.
2. Elijah taken by a whirlwind and Elisha succeeds him
3. Israel and Judah defeat Moab
4. Elisha performs miracles
5. Naaman healed of leprosy
6. Elisha and the Syrian army
7. Syrian siege miraculously ends
8. Hazael becomes king of Syria
9. Jehu anointed; Jezebel killed
10. Jehu destroys Ahab's house and Baal
11. Athaliah killed; Joash crowned
12. Joash repairs the Temple
13. Elisha dies; Israel battles Syria
14. Amaziah and Jeroboam II
15. Kings of Judah and Israel
16. Ahaz turns to idolatry
17. Samaria falls; Israel exiled
18. Hezekiah reforms Judah
19. Jerusalem delivered from Assyria
20. Hezekiah healed; Babylonian envoys
21. Manasseh and Amon rule wickedly
22. Book of the Law found
23. Josiah reforms Judah
24. Babylon invades; Jehoiachin exiled
25. Jerusalem and Temple destroyed

VERSES

- 1:10
- 2:11
- 3:18
- 4:7
- 5:14
- 6:17
- 7:16
- 8:13
- 9:6
- 10:28
- 11:12
- 12:9
- 13:21
- 14:3
- 15:3
- 16:2
- 17:18
- 18:5
- 19:35
- 20:5
- 21:2
- 22:11
- 23:25
- 24:14
- 25:9

*"God has made
this Jesus, whom
you crucified, both
Lord and Christ."*

ACTS 2:36

The Reign of Jesus

When Jesus rose from the dead, His saving work on earth was complete—but His work was not finished. He ascended to heaven to continue His exalted reign at the right hand of God (Ephesians 1:20–22) where He now reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords (Acts 2:33–36; Revelation 19:16). His throne is not on earth but in heaven, ruling over a spiritual kingdom composed of those who submit to His will (John 18:36).

The reign of Jesus fulfills God's eternal plan. The prophets foretold a kingdom that would never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44), and the apostles proclaimed that promise fulfilled in Christ. Peter said, "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). Christ's rule is not distant or symbolic—it is real, active, and personal.

Because Jesus reigns, His authority extends into every part of our lives. We no longer live for ourselves, but for Him who died and rose again (2 Corinthians 5:15). His reign calls us to obedience, holiness, and service. His commands are not burdensome; they bring freedom and peace to all who follow them (1 John 5:3).

One day every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:10–11). The wise do so now—willingly, joyfully, and daily—living under the gracious reign of the risen King. —Matt Wallin



This is the *Community* and *Family* You Need

From the beginning, God designed people to live in relationship—with Him and with one another. When He made Adam, He said, “It is not good that man should be alone” (Genesis 2:18). From that moment forward, every stage of God’s plan has included a people, not just a person.

Noah was not alone—his family entered the ark with him. Abraham was not called to live as a solitary believer—God promised to make him “a great nation.” Israel wandered, worshiped, and worked together. And when Jesus came, He gathered disciples into a community that became His church.

When Jesus returned to heaven, He left His followers something more than memories. He left them each other. In Acts 2, the new believers “continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.” They “had all things in common” and cared for one another like family (Acts 2:42–47).

The church is still the same today—the family of God. In Christ, we are “fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God” (Ephesians 2:19). The church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. It is where we belong, grow, and serve together.

A Christian cannot thrive apart from the body of Christ. The church is God’s provision for your encouragement, accountability, and strength. It is the family you were made for.

If you have been walking alone, we would love to open the Bible with you and help you discover the joy of belonging to the church Jesus built. —Matt Wallin



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