

Daniel 7 and the Kingdom of God 12-19-26

Daniel 2 and Daniel 7 are bookends to the portion of Daniel that pertains to the importance of not compromising with sin. These two chapters take place nearly 60 years apart, and they contain visions from two very different men, Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar. Yet the visions both pertain to the same things: the coming of the Kingdom of God.

What is the kingdom of God? When John the Baptist came, he proclaimed that it was at hand. Then Jesus and His apostles preached the same thing (Matthew 3:2, 4:23, 10:7). When Jesus and the Apostles preached, they proclaimed "*The Gospel of the Kingdom*" and "*The Word of the Kingdom*" (Matthew 9:35, 13:19). More specifically Jesus said "*Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who shall not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.*" (Matthew 16:28). Clearly Jesus saw that the kingdom which Daniel saw was coming in His work on the earth.

What is the kingdom of God? Another way to view it is how the New Testament writers addressed it as having come. Paul said that Christians are moved into it when they were saved (Col. 1:13). He also said that Christians work in it as they labor for God (Col. 4:11). Many see the kingdom as something yet to come, but Paul told the Corinthians that the future of the kingdom is not coming, but that Jesus will one day deliver it back to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24).

Jesus built a kingdom and is King; All authority given to Him (Mt 28:18). At the same time we are told that Jesus built a church and is Head; All authority given to Him (Eph. 1:10). There is one simple, profound and inescapable conclusion to these facts: the kingdom and the church are the same.

If the kingdom and the church are the same, we need to clarify the meaning of the church. Jesus told Peter in Matthew 16:18 He would build His church. The word church (*ekklesia*) means a group or body of people separated by something common. If we are His church, then we are separated to belong to Him. We are Christ's church; thus we are the church of Christ.

But this is where sometimes we struggle to rightly frame the church kingdom in our minds. The "Church of Christ" is NOT our name, it is a description of our identity (1 Cor. 12:12). In fact, our name is Christ (1 Cor. 12:27), the only name given by which we will be saved. This is how we realize we are the body of Christ (Eph. 1:23). Since the name (*nominae*) of Christ is all we have, if we do seek to name ourselves, we are de-nominating Christ.

As well, the church of Christ is NOT above its head (2 Thes. 2:4) or its authority (1 Cor. 4:6). We cannot establish anything Christ has not, nor can we do less than He has decreed. As a body cannot act without the head, so the church cannot act without Christ.

Lets apply some of these things: If you are a member of the body of Christ, it is not a denomination, and don't speak or think of it as such. It is a body of people who are saved and strive to have truth. You cannot be part of the "Church of Christ" denomination and still be part of the body of Christ. Second, don't see it as just a part of your life. The body of Christ IS Christ. You live and will be judged by your conduct within it. Do not see it as a business for your spiritual needs; You are the church. Finally, it was not built as something to entertain your feelings or keep you happy. It is a place of work for a reward.

