

The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven Revisited

By C. C. Morris

Do you believe God knows how to express Himself? Does He say what He means and mean what He says? Or do you think God failed His English exam and needs you to help Him explain (as the free-willers express it nowadays) "what God is *trying* to say"?

The doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is part of all orthodox confessions of faith. So any reader may understand exactly where I stand on this doctrine, I will tell you plainly: I personally believe that every word and every single letter ***in the original Hebrew and Greek texts*** of the Bible books was and is directly, supernaturally inspired by God the Holy Spirit, and exactly inspired and controlled by the Lord God Almighty as when, on Mount Sinai, He wrote with His own finger His commandments on stone tablets (Exodus 31.18, 32.16, 34.1; Deuteronomy 4.13, 5.22, 9.10-11). The Bible in its original texts in the original writings is THE PLENARY, word for word, letter for letter, literally inspired written word of God.

Word For Word?

Not at all to digress, but rather to clarify: The Lord Jesus Christ is the **living** Word of God, not to be confused with either the written or the spoken word. Those who believe the "gospel regeneration" theory fail to make this critical distinction. Blurring the line between Christ the **Living** Word of God and the Bible as the **written** word of God opens the door to the **false doctrine** that *the preaching of the gospel is THE necessary means for getting people "saved."* Due to their confusing Christ the Living Word and the Bible as God's written word, "Getting saved" is the Arminians' supposed free will equivalent to being born again or born from above. For clearing up some of the confusion, compare Hebrews 4.12 and 1 Peter 1.23:

A. "For the Word of God [Jesus Christ] is quick [meaning **living or alive**], and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword [see Revelation 1.16, 2.12-16; 19.15-21], piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a **discerner** of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in HIS sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the **eyes** of HIM with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have **a great high priest**, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. (Hebrews 4.12-14)

The Bible is not a "living discerner" with eyes and eyesight, nor is it a High Priest. **The Lord Jesus Christ is the Living Word of God**, our High Priest, a discerner with eyes and eyesight (Revelation 1.14, 2.18, 19.12).

B. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the **Word of God [Jesus Christ]**, which **liveth** and abideth for ever...But the Word [Greek, Logos, Jesus Christ] of the Lord endureth for ever...And this is the *word* [Greek, *rhema*] which by the gospel is preached [Greek, *euaggelisthen*, evangelized] unto you (1 Peter 1.23, 25)."

In these two verses Peter speaks of both **the Living Word Jesus Christ** [*Logos*] and **the spoken words** [*rhema*] of Peter and others; and he uses the two different words to clearly distinguish between the two!

The difference between **Christ the Logos of God** (John 1.1) and Peter's *talking about Christ* (***rhema***) in his preaching, evangelizing, proclaiming, or announcing *about* Christ (Greek, *euaggelisthen*, from which we get the words *evangelism* and *evangelize*) is like the difference of having real food to eat versus someone telling you about a good meal.

1. From John 1.1, almost all of God's children are well acquainted with our Lord's name being the LOGOS or WORD of God: "In the beginning was the Word (LOGOS), and the Word (LOGOS) was with God, and the Word (LOGOS) was God." As sure as you know it, Peter certainly knew it. Look at the text in more detail:

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the **Word/LOGOS of God**, which **liveth** and abideth for ever...But the word (RHEMA) of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word (RHEMA) which by the gospel is preached unto you. Or, literally, "This is the (RHEMA) which was announced (Greek, EVANGELIZED) to you."

Surely the gospel RHEMA endures forever; that is uncontested: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having **the everlasting gospel** (EVANGELLION) to *preach* unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people (Revelation 14.6)." But the gospel (good news) of the Lord Jesus Christ is not the same thing as Christ Himself and what He accomplished by His life, death, and resurrection and all else He did for and in His people.

2. Then what is RHEMA? The dictionary in *Berry's Interlinear Greek New Testament* says that rhema is

(1) a word spoken; a word or saying of any kind:

Luke 7.1: when he had ended all his **sayings (rhema)** in the audience of the people

Luke 9.45: they understood not this **saying (rhema)**

Romans 10.8: The **word (rhema)** is nigh thee, **in thy mouth**, and in thy heart: that is, the **word (rhema)** of faith, **which we preach**;

(2) a thing, a matter, a business:

Luke 2.15: see this **thing (rhema)** which is come to pass

2 Cor. 13.1: In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every **word (rhema)** be established.

To **tell** Bob and Sally (*rhema, evangellion*) (which is only **rhema**) how nice it is to be married is not at all the same thing as Bob and Sally *actually getting married*, as they'll find out!

The proper understanding of the two distinct uses of the term **the Word of God** is foundational to the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Nothing is easier than for a man to try to take credit for God's work of salvation. A man begins by saying *the preached word* is what gets people "saved," and he ends by saying, "**I** got nine people saved last night. If **I** hadn't preached to them, they'd still be headed for Hell."

II.

To the subject at hand; I have said all the preceding to say this: our God, who used WORDS to create this Universe and all that is in it, the Creator God in Genesis 1 has a better vocabulary than any and all men, and a perfect understanding of what His words mean. What words mean to GOD is the only way for men to understand those words. When God uses two different terms to describe two different kingdoms, they are exactly that, two different kingdoms. One is the Kingdom of Heaven, written about by **Matthew only** which point in itself should call our attention to the fact that "Kingdom of Heaven" has a distinct meaning. The other is the Kingdom of God written about by Mark, Luke, John, Paul, and others, including Matthew. (Matthew also mentions the Kingdom of God, but only five times, while he names "the Kingdom of Heaven" 32 times.)

The **KINGDOM OF GOD** and the **KINGDOM OF HEAVEN** are two distinct kingdoms. He who is **THE WORD** has a perfect vocabulary and unbounded wisdom in His perfect choice of words, something no man has. No man can compete with the Almighty God, correct Him, or help Him to better explain "what He meant to say." For men to say, "God is *trying* to teach us...," or "What God is *trying* to say," is blasphemy. Saying "God really meant the Kingdom of God when He said Kingdom of Heaven" is like giving the Lord God a failing mark on His English exam.

GOD

Whom we call GOD is the one living, supreme, divine, Spirit Being, the Creator, owner, and ruler over all His creation, which is everything that

exists other than Himself. He can be known only by His willingness to reveal Himself to whomsoever He will. He has a will, and the eternal counsel of His will is ratified and sealed in His absolute predestination of all things that come to pass. The total of all experiences of all existing beings and things is but the unfolding and revelation of His will. He has all power to do His will in the armies of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, "What doest Thou?" If a man makes such a "What doest Thou?" demand upon Him, that puny action itself is but part of God's will and purpose (to teach that man and others how arrogantly stupid he is), and the Lord God Almighty is under no obligation whatsoever to answer his foolish questionings. The wrath of men praises Him though we may not understand how it does, and He restrains whatever measure of man's wrath would not further His will. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain (Psalm 76.10)."

"Every purpose is established by counsel...(Proverbs 20.18)," and that fact will never be better illustrated than by God Himself: "...We have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the **purpose** of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own **will** (Ephesians 1.11)."

HEAVEN

"Heaven" is a place, a location, an abode, a spiritual locale, which is, we are given to understand, the seat of Almighty God's government and His home. The universe cannot contain Him, because He infinitely surpasses the bounds of the universe. So when we speak of Heaven as being His "home," we are only referring to that beatific locale that the omnipresent God has been pleased to share with some of His created beings, as the congregating place of the angels and of those He has chosen from among mankind who have found eternal grace, mercy, peace, and favor in His sight, through the Lord Jesus Christ, His Person, and His work. There, in that sublime place called Heaven, these blessed spirits can and do now happily commune with the God of all grace and mercies and with each other. There also He

maintains His throne, which is the representation of His authority, power, and rulership over all He has created. His creation is all that exists besides Himself, for He is before all things and by Him all things were created and by Him all things consist (Colossians 1.13-17).

Heaven has many mansions plus a special place that Christ has prepared for His elect bride (John 14.1ff). Shortly before He departed from this world to return to the glory He had with His Father before the world was, He said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also (John 14.1-3)." That place is something in addition to the many mansions there. This extraordinary place is called the **New Jerusalem**.

The New Jerusalem is not the present-day church, and it did not come down at the time of the cross and crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ, nor did it come down "spiritually" on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

Around A. D. 51, at least eighteen to twenty years after the Pentecost recorded in Acts 2, Paul wrote to the Galatians that "**JERUSALEM WHICH IS ABOVE** is free, which is the mother of us all (Galatians 4.26)." He did not say Jerusalem which was above, or that it was or is some "spiritual Jerusalem" which came down. It is still "up there."

The New Jerusalem Paul and John wrote of has not come down yet, and it will not come down until after the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20.11-15 and the New Earth of Revelation 21.1 is opened for eternal occupancy.

It should be obvious that GOD is entirely different from His creation, and since He created all things, He must have created Heaven.

Then GOD is different from HEAVEN as He is different from His Creation. And since that is so, would not the KINGDOM OF GOD be

something different from the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN? Of course they are distinct, separate kingdoms, and the Scriptures make that fact clear, in part by using these two different God-given names—the KINGDOM OF GOD and THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

The words GOD and HEAVEN are two distinct words with entirely different distinct definitions: One is the divine Being; the other is a place. The One is the Creator; the other is the created. That fact in itself should give anyone a strong clue that the KINGDOM OF GOD and the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN are two different kingdoms, *if God be pleased to reveal it to one's mind and understanding.*

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Christ exactly defines the Kingdom of GOD in John 3: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (John 3.3, 5)." There is no room for doubt as to what the Kingdom of God is, and who are its citizens, and who are not. Do not say the Kingdom of God is more or less than precisely what Jesus Christ said it is.

We start with the scriptural assumption that any sinner specifically, and mankind **in general, as a rule**, by nature, in a *timely* way, being not born from above, is (IN HIS EXPERIENCE) outside of the Kingdom of GOD. That is by his experience only. From the viewpoint of the Lord God Almighty, however, there are only two eternally unchangeable categories, and every child of Adam, from God's viewpoint, is eternally, unchangeably in one of those two groups and will never transfer—or be transferred—to the other. By God's predestination, the "great gulf fixed" spoken of in Luke 16.26 is already unalterably fixed in this world, in this life, as well as in the next. We just don't have the spiritual eyesight to clearly see that fact.

Christ Himself gives **the exception to this rule with the word "except" in John 3, verse 3 AND in verse 5**: Those who are born again (or as the margin gives it, born from above), those who are born of water and of the Spirit—these only, who are so born, and no others see and enter into the Kingdom of God. Those who are not so born, can neither see nor enter into the Kingdom of GOD, nor will they ever.

That fact in itself excludes billions who are in the Kingdom of HEAVEN from seeing or entering the Kingdom of God, as we shall presently see, Lord willing.

The Kingdom of GOD, therefore, is not **everyone and everything that exists**; not by any stretch of the imagination. That is simply because among everyone who exists and everything that exists are untold multitudes who are not born from above or born again and never will be. Therefore, if one is not born again (John 3.3-5) he can neither see nor enter the Kingdom of GOD. That is what Jesus told Nicodemus.

The Lord Jesus Christ said that only those who are born from above are in the Kingdom GOD. Everyone else is in some other kingdom or some other place. Therefore the Kingdom of GOD is not the same thing as the kingdom that rules over all, namely, the Kingdom of HEAVEN (Psalm 103.19).

Here I must mention that the Kingdom of GOD is, and must be, a **proper subset** of the Kingdom of HEAVEN.

A "**proper subset**" is something that is part of a larger set, class, collection, or category. Examples:

1. All citizens of Kansas are citizens of the USA, but all citizens of the USA are not citizens of Kansas. Kansas is a proper subset of the USA.
2. All apples are fruit, but not all fruits are apples. Apples are a proper subset of the more general category of Fruit.

3. All women, considered collectively, constitute a proper subset of Mankind, but all Mankind are obviously not women.
4. All plums grow on trees, but not all things that grow on trees are plums. Plums are a proper subset of the broader term, "things that grow on trees."
5. All Chevrolets are automobiles, but not all automobiles are Chevrolets. Chevrolets are a proper subset of "automobiles."
6. All saints are sinners, but not all sinners are saints. Saints are a proper subset of sinners.
7. Everyone in the kitchen is in the house, but everyone in the house is not necessarily in the kitchen. The kitchen is a proper subset of the house.
8. Everyone in the Kingdom of GOD is in the Kingdom of HEAVEN, but everyone in the Kingdom of HEAVEN is not in the Kingdom of GOD. The Kingdom of God is a proper subset of the Kingdom of Heaven.

If God desired to say "God" in one text and "Heaven" in another, He certainly said what He eternally meant to say, because He had a reason to say it that way, and because He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand...(Daniel 4.35); "what His soul desireth, that He doeth (Job 23.13)." Inspiring the Scriptures word for word and letter for letter is part of what He "doeth," because that's exactly what His soul desireth.

Only fallen men are presumptuous enough to say the Kingdom of GOD and the Kingdom of HEAVEN are the same thing.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

The Kingdom of Heaven, as presented in Matthew's gospel, is the continuation of the throne of David and the kingdom of Israel, both of which

are earthly, literal, and due a future literal revitalization based on nothing less than the verity of Jehovah God and His eternally unchanging promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, and others. That's the reason the first verse in the New Testament, Matthew 1.1, links Jesus Christ to David and Abraham, and why Matthew is the only book in the Bible that mentions **the Kingdom of Heaven** by that name.

1. Our Lord and God is not only the God of Heaven; He is also the God over all the earth, not only "spiritually" but literally, and to be manifestly literal and visible at Christ's second coming:

And I will make thee swear by the LORD, **the God of heaven, and the God of the earth...** (Genesis 24.3a)

For the LORD most high is terrible; he is a great **King over all the earth** (Psalm 47.2).

Let them be confounded and troubled for ever; yea, let them be put to shame, and perish: That men may know that thou, whose name alone is **JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth** (Psalm 83.17-18).

And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one (Zechariah 14.9).

These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before **the God of the earth** (Revelation 11.4).

2. The earth is His footstool. "Thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and **the earth is my footstool** (Isaiah 66.1a). "But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by **the earth; for it is his footstool:** neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King (Matthew 5.34-35).

Heaven is my throne, and **earth is my footstool:** what house will ye build me? saith the Lord... (Acts 7.49).

Yet there are men who say He will never put His feet on His footstool again. Wouldn't you feel sorry for a poor little god who owns his very own personal footstool, but he cannot put his feet on it? Perhaps his wife won't let him. Pitiful. One I knew (call him Elder Oddo) who thought THE LORD wouldn't ever "set foot on this ol' earth agin because He don't want to get his feet dirty on this ol' earth." It never crossed Elder Oddo's mind that THE LORD is not going to get His feet dirty here; He is coming back to clean up His broken and fallen creation.

Elder Oddo's kind of thinking is the same as that which denies Christ will reign on the throne of David forever, when God says He will: "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, **upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom**, to order it, and **to establish it** with judgment and with justice from henceforth **EVEN FOR EVER**."

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this!" (Isaiah 9.7)

"...the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David" (Isaiah 9, above):

"And He shall reign over the house of Jacob **FOR EVER**; and **of His KINGDOM there shall be NO END** (Luke 1.32f)." He says, "Over the house of Jacob, which is **not** at all to say anything about reigning over His church, which is not at all the house of Jacob."

We will try, Lord willing, to examine some of the texts these brave, bold men resort to in order to try to justify their challenging God's veracity with the preconceived notions handed to them from the Roman Vatican:

III. OBJECTIONS BASED ON TEXTS:

Luke 17.20f furnishes two statements men use to try to prove that Christ will never have a literal, future, Kingdom OF HEAVEN on this earth:

- (a) "**The Kingdom of GOD comes not with observation**"; and
- (b) "**The Kingdom of GOD is within you.**"

Note that these two statements are about the Kingdom of God, which, according to what our Lord told Nicodemus, consists of only those who are born again, being born of water and of the Holy Spirit. These texts say nothing about the Kingdom of Heaven.

(a). The first controverted text: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation (Luke 17.20)."

This is certainly true. No human eye can see anyone being born of water and the Spirit (John 3.3-8, Titus 3.5-7). That would be SEEING the Kingdom of God, which no natural man can do. Remember?

The Kingdom of HEAVEN, however, in contrast, *shall* come with observation, such that "He cometh with clouds; and **every eye shall SEE Him**, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen (Revelation 1.7)." **Eyes see, and "every eye seeing Him" is definitely "coming with observation."**

Even those Jews who will be there to witness His return to the Mount of Olives "shall **LOOK UPON ME** whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." **To look upon Him is to see Him, and seeing Him is observation. Observing the King is at least part of observing the Kingdom of Heaven.** They will see Him when He comes as King of the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN; and as the King is part of His kingdom, so the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN comes with observation. The Kingdom of Heaven will come on this earth; God will yet have His Garden of Eden, and then, all mankind that is left on the earth at that time will enjoy it.

Why do you think Christ told His people to pray after this manner: "...Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, **on earth** as it is in Heaven?" And if the church were really the same thing as God's kingdom of Heaven already here visibly on earth, as Rome's followers—*i.e.* , amillennialists—believe,

then please answer this question for yourself: *Why should or would we pray "Thy Kingdom come" if the CHURCH is IT, i.e., if the church is the Kingdom, and it is already here?*

How, and why will this be brought about, that He will be **seen** by those who shall "**Look upon** Me whom they have pierced"? It will be because God said, "I will pour upon the house of **David**, and upon the inhabitants of **Jerusalem**, the spirit of grace and of supplications (Zechariah 12.10)."

"And THEN shall **APPEAR** the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and **then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they [all the tribes of the earth] shall SEE the Son of man coming** in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24.30)." This exactly parallels Revelation 1.7, quoted above.

Anything that **appears** and is **seen** *must by definition come with observation*. In the context Christ makes it plain that *this is the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, not the kingdom of God*.

"And this gospel of **the kingdom** shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and **then** shall the end come (Matthew 24.14)."

"**Then** (not *now*) shall **the Kingdom of Heaven** (not the church) be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom (Matthew 25.1)."

"For **the Kingdom of Heaven** (not the *church*) is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods (Matthew 25.14)."

"Then shall the **King** say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit **the kingdom** (not the *church*) prepared for you from the foundation of the world (Matthew 25.34)." This of course has nothing to do with the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20.11-15.

Since all the tribes of earth shall see His coming, and seeing is observation, **the Kingdom of Heaven** therefore does come with observation, although, as Christ said, *the Kingdom of God does not*. Therefore **the Kingdom of God**, which **cometh not with observation, is not the same thing as the Kingdom of Heaven, which comes with a universal observation.**

(b). The second controverted text: "**Neither shall they say, 'Lo here!' or, 'lo there!' for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you** (Luke 17.21)." These words are used by the men who insist this kingdom is some sweet-perfumed, mystic, spiritual, invisible thing deep down *inside* peoples' hearts, souls, and minds, 'way down deep "**within**" them, where nobody but God can see it. According to the "God loves everybody and everything" crowd, the Kingdom of God was even in those sleazy Pharisees who were trying so hard to kill Jesus, the very ones Christ was addressing.

At that moment in Luke 17.21, our Lord was **speaking to a mixed crowd** of saints and reprobates. Examine the text in its context. He was speaking directly to the wicked Pharisees who intended to persecute and kill Him. He was certainly *not* telling these reprobates that the Kingdom of **God** was hidden deep down inside THEM, within their depraved hearts and souls.

In John 8 Christ was speaking to the same class of reprobates: "Jesus said unto them, **If God were your Father, ye would love me:** for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? *even* because **ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil,** and the lusts of your father **ye will do.** He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And **because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.** Which of you convinceth me of sin? **And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God** (John 8.42-47)."

The word "within" as used in Luke 17.21 means **within** or **among** *this group of people as a whole*, among those who were there listening to this ongoing deadly discussion between the Pharisees and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The use of the word *within* is exactly the same as if a man addressing a general congregation said, "There are church members *within* this congregation," meaning "There are church members *among* you, *among* or *within* this congregation." That certainly would not mean that everyone without exception who was there was a church member; no, not at all. It would only mean that within "you" (within, among, or in this congregation as a whole), some church members are among you.

In modern terms, if the Mafia's wicked leaders were told, "The FBI is within you," ("The FBI is among you") anyone hearing that should understand the FBI had infiltrated the Mafia and had FBI spies and informants among the Mafia's membership. No one would conclude the speaker was telling the Mafia's leaders that deep down in their hearts and souls those wicked criminals were really FBI sympathizers and agents.

On that occasion in Luke 17, the Kingdom of GOD that was **within/among** that group whom Christ was addressing consisted of Christ the King Himself, His apostles, and no doubt some of His disciples. As far as can be evident from the text, none of the Pharisees were part of the Kingdom of God.

No one there that day could "see" that the Lord and His disciples were part of the Kingdom of God, **because**, as the text says, **The Kingdom of God comes without observation!**

The Pharisees were, however, in the Kingdom of Heaven, which "ruleth over ALL," and the **all** the Kingdom of Heaven **rules over** includes the Pharisees and their father, the devil.

Finally on this point, saying "the Kingdom of God is within you [or **among** you, which is what Christ actually said, translated more properly] is

a far cry from His telling the wicked Pharisees "Ye are within the Kingdom of God," which He did NOT say or even imply.

A TYPICAL OBJECTION

AND MY REPLY

The following is the usual type of objection I see. It was sent to me by a man we shall call **Elder Oddo**. That is not his real name; the name is changed to protect the guilty. I will quote from his letter exactly and at length:

"The Kingdom of GOD and the Kingdom of HEAVEN are the same thing **because the same things are said about both of them**. In Matthew 5.3 Christ said, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven and in Luke 6.20 Christ said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of **God**. (Luke 6.20).

"Again in Matthew 11.11, Christ said, 'among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he.' In Luke 7.28 we have the Lord making the same statement, only this time the phrase `kingdom of **God**' is used: "Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of **God** is greater than he (Luke 7.28).' It therefore seems very clear **TO ME** that they both are one and the same kingdom. **TO ME** the phrase Kingdom of Heaven simply tells us the nature of the kingdom and the phrase kingdom of God tells us whose kingdom it is."

[All bold, capitalized, italicized, and underlined emphases are supplied by the Editor. The original letter had no supplied emphasis. CCM]

Reply:

1. First of all, in his very first sentence he says, "The Kingdom of **GOD** and the Kingdom of HEAVEN are the same thing **because the same things are said about both of them.**" I frankly do not know whether to laugh or to cry. If being able to make the same comments about two different things actually proves that they are the same thing, then the North Pole is the same thing as the South Pole because both of them are cold. This should be fair warning to all our readers:

Men, I speak to you: If someone believes such illogical things and finds he has one or more traits in common with you, then please BE CAREFUL! He thinks that, because the same thing may be said about both of you, this proves you and he are the exact same thing. Next he may try to empty your bank account, and take your wife and children, your house, and your car (not necessarily in that order)!

Ladies, I now address you: If he finds two or three things he has in common with you, no telling where that will end up! If he and you share, say, the same eye color, hair color, height, and weight, wouldn't that prove to him beyond all doubt that he is you? Remember his exact words in his letter: "The Kingdom of GOD and the Kingdom of HEAVEN are the same thing **because the same things are said about both of them.** "

For those who might be interested in the logical technicalities, this man is guilty of **the fallacy of the excluded middle**, one of the most common of logical fallacies.

A quick *correct* example:

All men are mortal

Socrates is a man

Ergo, Socrates is mortal.

(the common category of **man/men** is the middle term linking mortality with Socrates.)

A quick *incorrect* example:

Bildad's dog is black

Your cat is black

Ergo, Bildad's dog is your cat.

(Wrong, but Elder Oddo would see nothing wrong with this argument.

The category of black things is not a middle term, which is needed in order to form a valid argument. Almost anything could be black—paint, crayons and crayon marks, clouds, cars, people, submarines, rocks, ink, paper, birds, cows, dogs, cats, chalkboards, markets, Fridays, eyes, midnights, hair; but nothing necessitates that because one thing is black it must be the same thing as some other black thing.)

The truth is, similarities exist within categories, so the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven may have similarities. All kingdoms have a king, but just because Spain's kingdom has a king, that does not make the kingdom of Spain the same thing as the Kingdom of God. It is the differences and NOT the similarities between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven that make the two kingdoms unique.

An orange is a juicy fruit and a tomato is a juicy fruit. Does that make a tomato the exact same thing as an orange? Is Walmart really the exact same thing as Macy's because they are both department stores? Is my cat *really* your dog because we can both say, "She is a warm, furry, housebroken pet"? Yet according to our friend's objection that "The Kingdom of GOD and the Kingdom of HEAVEN are the same thing **because the same things are said about both of them**," we are to toss reason aside and say my refrigerator is really Alaska and Alaska is my fridge because both of them are cold enough to freeze water.

2. Second, the objector twice admits this is his own subjective opinion. "To ME, to **ME**," he says. If he said, "To me, the Bible makes no sense," would that prove the Bible makes no sense? Who made him, or you, or me, the final arbiter of what the Bible "means"?

The proper understanding of the Bible has nothing to do with what something means to ME, or to you, or to anyone else, other than to God Himself.

We are receivers, not dispensers.

If I answered this brother by saying, "Well, *TO ME* they are two different kingdoms," does my "*To ME*" statement carry any more weight or any less weight than his "*To ME*" statement? NO, it does not. A hundred people may have a hundred different opinions about what a text means. All may be wrong, but they cannot all be right. To shout "To **ME** it means...." says nothing beyond what it says: it is merely one man's opinion.

The relevant question is: **What does it mean to God?** Why did HE say it with the words He used to say it? God is unimpressed with our depraved thoughts (Isaiah 55.8-11). **The Bible was written to correct our thinking.**

3. That someone in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than John, and someone in the Kingdom of God is greater than John does not prove they are the same. If someone in New Mexico is greater than Billy, and someone in China is greater than Billy, does that mean China is New Mexico or New Mexico is China?

If someone in **Texas** is greater than Herkimer Jones, and someone in **Fort Worth, Texas** is greater than Herkimer Jones, does that mean Fort Worth is the same thing as all the rest of Texas? Another *non sequitur*, for which amillennialists are famous.

4. For the sake of the discussion, I grant to Elder Oddo that "the poor" in Luke 6 are essentially the same as "the poor in spirit" of Matthew 5.3.

These, the poor in spirit, are the elect of God, His chosen people, His born-again ones. They are poor in spirit because God has made them that, before He makes them rich in Christ Jesus. Hannah said: "**The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: He bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor** out of the dust, and lifteth up **the beggar** from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to MAKE them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and He hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of **His saints**, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail (1Samuel 2.7-9)."

Theirs is the Kingdom of GOD by virtue of their being born again (John 3.3-5), and theirs is the Kingdom of HEAVEN because He makes them inherit the throne of glory.

What is this "throne of glory"? We are not left to speculate. It is Christ's own throne in His Kingdom of Heaven on earth when He returns, i.e., at His second coming or His "coming again" (John 14.3): "When the Son of man shall come in **His glory**, and all the holy angels with him, THEN shall **he sit upon the throne of HIS glory**: and before him shall be gathered **all nations** (Matthew 25.31f)." The glorified saints will occupy the Lord's throne with Him (amazing grace!) because He said so: "**To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne** (Revelation 3.21)."

Hannah's praise quoted above continues in verse 10: "The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed." This describes Armageddon and answers perfectly to what Christ said in Matthew 25 (above).

Please kindly note that Christ is presently seated on His Father's throne and not the throne of HIS—Christ's—glory. **The throne of HIS glory** is the throne of the Kingdom of Heaven (Isaiah 9.7, Matthew 19.28, 25.31;

Luke 1.32f), the throne of David's kingdom restored, as prophesied and promised:

"Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be **no end, upon the throne of David**, and upon His [Christ's] kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice **from henceforth EVEN FOR EVER. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this** (Isaiah 9.7)."

"And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration **when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of His glory**, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19.28)."

"To him that overcometh **will I grant to sit with me in my throne**, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne (Revelation 3.21)."

"When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, **then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory** (Matthew 25.31)."

"The Lord God shall give unto Him **the throne of His father David**: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob **FOR EVER**; and of His kingdom there shall be **no end** (Luke 1.32f)."

WHERE ARE THE REPROBATES?

If the Kingdom of GOD and the Kingdom of HEAVEN were the same thing, we would have a manmade dilemma:

God either rules over the reprobates or He does not rule over the reprobates.

If He rules over the reprobates they must be in either

(1) the Kingdom of GOD, or

(2) the Kingdom of HEAVEN, or

(3) some other kingdom, or

(4) no kingdom at all.

Where are the reprobates?

Before we continue we must address the case of reprobates, i.e., those whose final destination is the lake of fire. (Reprobates are those who are **not** the elect of God the Father, **not** chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, **not** redeemed by His blood, **not** predestinated to the adoption by Jesus Christ unto Himself, and **not** regenerated, called, sanctified, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit—Ephesians 1.1-14).

We know that by definition the reprobates are not children of God, they are not of God's elect, and therefore they are doomed to perish eternally.

Paul divides Adam's race into two distinct classes by another **rule** and its **exception**: "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, **except** ye be **reprobates**? (2 Corinthians 13.5)" We are here given to understand that Christ Jesus dwells in His saints; they are eternally united. So, either Jesus Christ is in a person or he is a reprobate.

Paul gives no other "halfway in-between" category. Everyone is one or the other, and that by eternal predestination. Therefore those who are classified as reprobates cannot be in the Kingdom of GOD.

So, where is the reprobate in relation to God's kingdoms? The free-will **Arminian** will quickly tell you the reprobate is in Satan's kingdom, and not God's. That is a faulty conclusion, because Satan's kingdom, like everything else, is dominated by God's Kingdom of HEAVEN that rules over **all** (Psalm 103.19). This text doesn't say, "The Kingdom of Heaven rules over everything except Satan and Satan's kingdom, " or anything else like that. If Satan's kingdom is not completely dominated by our sovereign God, one might wrongly conclude that God has no rule at all over Satan's kingdom.

Our Lord Jesus Christ clearly explains in Matthew 13 that the reprobates are within the bounds of the Kingdom of HEAVEN.

According to Christ's parables of the Kingdom of HEAVEN in Matthew 13, in the parable of the wheat and the tares, there are tares in the Kingdom of HEAVEN. "But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned (Hebrews 6.8)." (The word "rejected" is also used in referring to reprobates in Jeremiah 6.30. The idea of something being rejected as worthless is a fundamental key to the doctrine of reprobation.)

In studying the differences between the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, and the mix-and-match, two-into-one, blended and homogenized kingdom insisted upon by well-meaning people like Elder Oddo, a cardinal rule to keep in mind is:

IT IS NOT WHAT THE TWO KINGDOMS HAVE IN COMMON, BUT IT IS WHAT IS DIFFERENT, WHAT IS DISTINCTIVE, AND WHAT IS NOT HELD IN COMMON BY THE TWO. IT IS WHAT THE TWO KINGDOMS **DO NOT HAVE IN COMMON** WHICH MOST CLEARLY SHOWS THERE ARE TWO DIFFERENT KINGDOMS:

1. The Bible never says there are evil birds in the Kingdom of God, other than those who rest in its shadow and lodge in its branches. These dirty birds are only pretenders, seekers of some advantage they might gain by being near the Kingdom of God, and they are not an organic part of the Kingdom of God itself. In Luke 13.18-19, the Kingdom of God is represented by a tree grown from a mustard seed. Read the whole parable and realize: *A bird in a tree's shadow or in its branches is NOT an organic part of the tree!*

2. You will never find in Scripture that there are tares in the Kingdom of GOD.

3. The Bible never says there are "bad fish" (Matthew 13.47-50) in the Kingdom of God.

4. The Bible never says the Kingdom of God will be permeated with leaven (sin).

6. The Bible never says that anyone in the Kingdom of God will ever be bound and cast into outer darkness, as was done to the man in the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 22.13).

(We hope, Lord willing, to discuss some of these differences in more detail and the parables of Matthew 13 and Matthew 22 in the next issue. — CCM)

There is no scriptural problem whatsoever in saying the reprobates are in the Kingdom of HEAVEN because that kingdom rules over all, including Satan's kingdom and Satan's children (John 8.44), the reprobates. Thus, in the Kingdom of Heaven parables (Matthew 13) we find bad birds gobbling up the word, we see stony ground, we see those with no depth and no root, and those choked by thorns. That explains why He rules the Kingdom of HEAVEN with a rod of iron. In the Kingdom of God the Lord does not use that rod of iron on His wife (bride, the church) and His children. The Lord Jesus Christ is neither a wife beater nor a child abuser! The rod is for His enemies in the nations of the world: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will **I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they [the nations] be broken to shivers:** even as I received of my Father (Revelation 2.26-27)."

If Satan's kingdom is some place where God does not reign supremely, then the Psalmist was wrong, and God's Kingdom of HEAVEN does not rule over ALL.

But Elder Oddo tells us that the Kingdom of HEAVEN is the same thing as the Kingdom of GOD. So he and those like him must say the reprobate is in the Kingdom of GOD or else the reprobate is outside the rule of God. If the reprobate is in the Kingdom of God, he therefore must be born again, by reasoning from (a) Christ's own definition of the Kingdom of GOD in His

explanation to Nicodemus in John 3.3-5; with (b) the mistaken belief that both kingdoms are the same; which would mean either (1) the reprobate is in the Kingdom of God, and therefore he is a child of God, or (2) the reprobate is not in God's kingdom, so God does not rule over the reprobate. All this leads to many problems for the amillennialist to resolve, because God's kingdom rules over ALL.

This probably explains why the amillennial disciples of Origen and the Pope have no problem with their false doctrine saying Christ told the reprobate Pharisees, "Behold, the kingdom of God is WITHIN you (Luke 17.21, KJV). "

To carry the forced conclusion a step further, consider: Since (according to their unscriptural theory that the two kingdoms are the exact same identical kingdom, but for some unidentified reason it has two aliases:

1. Then the reprobate must be a born-again child of God, and
2. By scriptural definition, the reprobate is to go to the lake of fire eternally,
3. Then according to Elder Oddo's "the two kingdoms are really only one and the same kingdom" theory any of **God's born again children who are also reprobates** (truly a contradiction in terms) must perish eternally in the lake of fire; a preposterous but necessary conclusion any amillennialist must embrace if he believes God has only one kingdom.

To put it another way and make the problem crystal clear: Either

(1) the reprobates are born again (because Elder Oddo says they are in the Kingdom of GOD, and the Lord Jesus said in John 3 that all who are in the Kingdom of God are the born again children of God) and they are in this two-in-one Kingdom, or

(2) They are born again, because they are in the Kingdom of GOD (John 3) AND they are **not** saved, because they are reprobates; or

(3) If reprobates are born again, because Elder Oddo says they are in the Kingdom of GOD (John 3 and Luke 17), they will be eternally saved, so they are not really reprobates; or

(4) the reprobates, who are born again because—according to Elder Oddo—they are in the Kingdom of GOD (John 3.3-5), these reprobates will be eternally lost; so, carried to Elder Oddo's faulty conclusion, namely, that some born-again ones will be eternally lost.

If the reprobates are **not** in the strange hybrid Kingdom, then they are some place outside of "ALL" which God rules over, so God does not rule over reprobates—according to the odd **mix-and-match kingdom** theory.

But, in truth, the Kingdom of HEAVEN is such that "The LORD hath prepared His THRONE in the HEAVENS; and His KINGDOM [OF HEAVEN] RULETH OVER ALL (Psalm 103.19)."

This kingdom has a throne, and God is the sole occupant of that throne. All that is under the jurisdiction of this throne and the God upon this throne, God Himself calls "the Kingdom of HEAVEN." This is an unqualified "all." There are no exceptions to this all. SOME throne must be the highest, none higher, the ULTIMATE, and this is it!

"All" includes all that He in His heavenly kingdom (Kingdom of HEAVEN) rules over, which is the entire totality of the created universe and everything in it, including the elect children of God and the reprobates, as is all else: Earth and its occupants, the moon, sun, stars, galaxies, and anything and everything known or unknown by men. Whether men know about something or not makes no difference. If it exists, God rules it in the Kingdom of HEAVEN. In the Kingdom of HEAVEN there are those who are born again, born from above of water and of the Spirit, who are also in the Kingdom of GOD, which is a **proper subset** of the Kingdom of HEAVEN, because the Kingdom of GOD is part of *all*.

If one insists there are some people or things such as hell, Satan, and reprobates, which are not in the kingdom of HEAVEN (or the Kingdom of

GOD, if he insists) then he must believe there are some people or things our God does not rule over. Such things must be outside the realm our God calls "ALL." IF it were as the objector would have it,

(1) There must be a kingdom that God rules that is NEITHER the Kingdom of GOD NOR the Kingdom of HEAVEN. But God has already excluded this impossibility by saying His Kingdom of HEAVEN rules over ALL. Or,

(2) There must be a kingdom God does **not** rule over. But God has already excluded this impossibility by saying His Kingdom of HEAVEN rules over ALL.

I had good reason to ask those questions in my opening words. There are men who believe they can improve on what God hath said and express better than He could what He was "trying to say" about His kingdoms.

"Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being His counsellor hath taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge, and shewed to Him the way of understanding?" (Isaiah 40.13-14) There are scads of folks who think they are qualified to accept this awesome challenge, but they are "too humble" to say so publicly.

There are others who "received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17.11) —CCM

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