

The Church Versus the Kingdom

The “Church” and the “Kingdom” are not identical. They are never confounded in the Scriptures. The Church is compared to a **“House”** (1Tim. 3:15), to a **“Temple”** (1 Cor. 3: 16-17), to a **“Body”** (1 Cor. 12:12-31), but never to a “Kingdom.” Christ is the **“HEAD”** of the Church (Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18), but He is never spoken of as its **“KING.”** His relation to the Church is that of **“LORD”** (Master). 1 Tim. 6:13-14. The saints are not His **“subjects”** or His **“servants,”** they are **fellow “HEIRS.”** Rom. 8: 17. The Church is not to be ruled over by Christ, but to rule with Him. The Church is here; the Kingdom is **TO COME.** The Church is being **“built up,”** a gradual process, the Kingdom is to be **“SET UP,”** a sudden event. The Church is an invisible and Heavenly **“SPIRITUAL ORGANISM,”** entered by the “New Birth,” and is to be **“caught out,”** while the Kingdom is an outward, visible, and earthly **“POLITICAL ORGANIZATION”** that is to be **“set up”** on the **EARTH,** of which the Jewish Nation will be the “Head” (Deu. 28: 11-13), and will have a King, a Throne, and a Capital City-Jerusalem. The Kingdom is characterized by a **“Throne,”** the Church by a **“Table.”** Thus, we see that the Church and the Kingdom have different **“spheres”** of work, and different **“time periods”** in which to do that work. Therefore, what God has separated let no, man join together.

There is much confusion as to the difference between the **“Kingdom of God,”** the **“Kingdom of Heaven,”** and the **“Church.”** No amount of sophistical argument can make them synonymous.

The **“KINGDOM OF GOD”** is the all-inclusive Kingdom, or rule of the God of three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) over the whole Universe, especially over all moral intelligences, angelic or human, and includes “Time” and “Eternity,” “Heaven” and “Hell.” It is **“SPIRITUAL,”** and **“cometh not with observation”** (outward show). Luke 17:20-21. It is entered by the **“New Birth”** (John 3: 5), and is not “meat” and **“drink,”** but **“Righteousness”** and **“Peace,”** and **“Joy”** in the **HOLY GHOST.** Rom. 14:17. The **“KINGDOM OF HEAVEN”** is a New Testament term, and is found in Matthew’s Gospel only, where it is mentioned 27 times. It is the earthly sphere of the “Kingdom of God,” and is outward and visible. Its character is described in the 12 “Kingdom of Heaven Parables” given in Matt. 13:1-50; 18:23-35; 20:1-16; 22:1-14; 25:1-30. From these Parables we see that the “Kingdom of Heaven” is limited as to its “Time” and “Sphere.” Its “Time” is from the First to the Second Coming of Christ, and its “Sphere” is over that part of the world that we call Christendom. In it there is a mixture of **“Good”** and **“Evil,”** of **“Wheat”** and **“Tares,”** of **“Wise Virgins”** and **“Foolish Virgins,”** of **“Good Fish”** and **“Bad Fish.”** Entrance into it may be obtained by a righteousness that barely exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees. Dropping the Kingdom, let us now look at the Church

WHAT THE CHURCH IS

1. The Church is a MYSTERY

To the Old Testament Prophets, the Kingdom was no “Mystery,” neither was the fact that the Gentiles were to be saved. Rom. 9: 25-26 (Hosea 2:23). The “Mystery” was what was to come in between the **“SUFFERINGS”** (Isa. 53:1-12) and the **“GLORY”** of Christ (Psa. 72: 1-20. Dan. 7: 13-14), that is, between the **“CROSS”** and the **“CROWN.”** 1 Peter 1:7-11 This “Mystery” was revealed to the Apostle Paul. Eph. 3: 1-11. It was that God was going to form an entirely **“NEW THING,”** composed of both **Jew** and **Gentile,** to be called the Church. The purpose then of this Dispensation is not the bringing in of the “Kingdom,” or the conversion of the world, but the “out gathering” of an **“Elect Body.”** – **THE CHURCH.** Acts 15:14-18.

2. The Church is a BODY

The Church is not only an “Elect Body,” it is the **“BODY OF CHRIST.”** Eph. 1:22-23. As its **“HEAD,”** there could be no Church until Christ had been raised from the dead and seated at the Right Hand of God, for God does not make **headless bodies**. In 1 Cor. 12:12-13 we are told how this “Body” is formed. It is formed by **“Spirit Baptism.”** The Church then could not have existed until the **“Gift”** of the Holy Ghost on the “Day of Pentecost.” Therefore, the Church is composed only of those who are baptized into it by the Holy Ghost, that is by the “New Birth,” and when the Holy Ghost ceases His work of “Baptism” the formation of the Church as Christ’s **“BODY”** will cease, and the Church will be complete, and be taken out of the world. The Church then is not an **“Organization,”** but an **“ORGANISM”** – a **LIVING BODY**.

3. The Church is a BUILDING.

In 1 Cor. 3:9 the Church is spoken of as **“God’s BUILDING,”** and in verse 16 as the **“TEMPLE OF GOD.”** In Eph. 2: 20-22, as a building in process of construction, it is spoken of as being **“fitly framed together”** and growing into a **“HOLY TEMPLE”** for the **“HABITATION OF GOD”** in the Person of the **HOLY GHOST**. As God’s Presence was manifested in the Tabernacle by the **“Shekinah Glory,”** so now in this Dispensation, when Israel, nationally, is out of fellowship with God, and there is no Temple at Jerusalem, the Church is the **“Habitation of God”** on earth, where He manifests Himself through the **HOLY GHOST**. Matt. 18: 20; 28: 20. The “Spiritual Temple” of the Church could not be erected until Christ became the **“ROCK.”** Matt. 16: 18. 1 Cor. 3:9-11. Then upon Christ the “Rock,” the “Foundation of the Apostles and New Testament Prophets” was laid (Eph. 2:20-22), and the first layer of the superstructure of 3000 “Living Stones” (1 Pet. 2: 5) was laid on the “Day of Pentecost” (Acts 2:41), and a few days later the second layer of 5000 was added (Acts 4: 4), and so on, down the centuries, the Church has been growing as a **“HOLY TEMPLE.”**

4. The Church is to be the BRIDE OF CHRIST.

At present the Church is a **“VIRGIN,”** but a Virgin **espoused**. 2 Cor. 11:2. The first Adam had his bride and so must the “Last Adam.” Some hold that the Church cannot be both the **“Body”** and **“Bride”** of Christ, and that the “Bride” must be Israel. But we must not forget that there are **“Two Brides”** mentioned in the Scriptures, one in the Old Testament and the other in the New. The one in the Old Testament is “Israel,” the Bride of Christ, the one in the New Testament is the “Church,” the Bride of Christ. Because of her whoredoms Israel is at the present time a **“cast off WIFE.”** When she ceases from her adulteries she will be taken back. Jer. 3: 1-18; Ezek. 16: 1-63; Hosea 2: 1-23, 3: 1-5. She will not be taken back as a “Virgin,” but as a **“Wife.”** But it is a **“VIRGIN”** that the Lamb (Christ) is to marry. So, the “Wife” of the Old Testament cannot be the “Bride” (Virgin) of the New Testament. Again, the “Wife” (Israel) is to reside in the earthly Jerusalem during the Millennium, while the “Bride” (the Church) will reside in the New Jerusalem. These distinctions make it clear that Israel cannot be the “Bride” of Christ. Where the word “Wife” is used in Rev. 19: 7-9; 21:9-10, it signifies the relation of the Bride to Christ **after** marriage, when she is no longer “Bride” but “Wife.” As to the Church being both the “Body” and “Bride” of Christ, we have the type of Eve, who was **of the body of Adam** before she became his bride.