



**A
LETTER
FROM YOUR
PASTOR:
JULY 2023**

by Lee Shipp

**NEW COVENANT KINGS – KINGDOM AUTHORITY –
PART 1**

Everything changed when Jesus arrived. It was supposed to. History, governments, races, and religions were converging to this climax. The message changed with Jesus. A new day was dawning. John the Baptist was set apart to give fair warning to the long-awaited Messiah, who was about to burst upon the scene. John the Baptist was the end of an Old Testament era; he bid farewell to the shadows and pointed to the light, *“Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”* Thousands were compelled into the wilderness to hear this wild man, this prophet crying with fearless authority, *“Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.”*

John’s greatest privilege was to point the world to the New King, the world’s Savior – God’s lamb of redemption. Jesus was the new messenger that John was to present. Jesus was going to change everything. He would bring in a New Covenant. A covenant much better than the one Moses instituted, *“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ”* (John 1:17). Jesus is the One Isaiah saw skipping upon the mountains publishing good news and glad tidings, *“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”* (Isaiah 52:7).

Make no mistake, Jesus was saying things that had never been said before. Jesus was preaching the gospel of the Kingdom, the gospel of grace (Acts 20:24). *“The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached ...”* (Luke 16:16). Without controversy, the preaching

changed with Jesus; the message changed with Jesus. Jesus brought something into the world that no other was able to deliver – grace and truth!

WHAT IS OUR MESSAGE?

This was the message that Jesus sent His disciples into the world to preach. They were commissioned to preach the gospel, the good news, and glad tidings to all men. *“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”* (Matthew 28:19-20).

Only after the prophets and John the Baptist was the Kingdom of God preached; according to Acts, they went everywhere and preached the Kingdom of God, the gospel of grace. The book of Acts concludes with this affirmation that Paul continued *“preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ ...”* (Acts 28:31).

Through Jesus, the New Covenant produced a new society, a new race of people – kingdom people! *“... [He] hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen”* (Revelation 1:6).

How do we reign as Kings? By His grace! *“For if by one man’s offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ”* (Romans 5:17).

To the surprise of the religious establishment, the Kingdom of God was not present in the law, in the ordinances, nor the temple disciplines though all these holy services were established by God. Paul courageously revealed, *“For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost”* (Romans 14:17). God will only accept those who serve Christ in these things (Romans 14:18).

Jesus said that the Kingdom is to be sought above everything else. Those who seek first the Kingdom and its righteousness (which is in the Holy Ghost) will be cared for by the King (Matthew 6:33). Jesus gave the keys of the Kingdom to believers so that they may unlock its treasures and distribute its resources to men and nations (Matthew 16:19), that in every generation the ambassadors of this Kingdom may say *“Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

AN UNSTABLE ENEMY

Satan's strategy had to change as this new Kingdom advanced on the earth, and a multitude of Kings appeared to do him much harm.

Satan had to corrupt the Kingdom. He had to take it out of the Spirit and bring it back to forms of religion.

It is the Church Satan seeks to dismantle. Would Satan cause a pandemic to hinder the Church? Yes! Though Satan is not against the religious meeting, he is terrified of the true manifestation of Jesus through those who live by the Spirit.

History has well documented Satan's persistent effort to scatter the children of God and break up their corporate life and influence. However, God and His Church prevail and will always prevail. The gates of hell cannot prevail against the Church. I am not referring to that institution that calls itself "Church"; instead, I refer to the actual expression of Christ that is demonstrated through the corporate life of His Church. The Church is the habitation of God by the Spirit.

To gain his advantage, Satan must hinder the fellowship of that body. He does this by causing individuals to separate themselves due to offenses. Through religious people, Satan will seek to shut up the Kingdom of God through forms and rituals. Satan will send his servants into the Church masquerading themselves as the servants of God. Do not be surprised by this for Satan himself pretends to be an angel of light. These servants of Satan are religious. They appear very holy. They are abusive. They love to debate and argue the scriptures. They are subversive and undermine the authority that God has established in His body. If allowed, they would take the believers back to Moses and a life of carnal works to gain God's favor. They are not Jesus' kings.

Paul fought hard to preserve the believers in his day. The efforts of Satan to corrupt the gospel of grace were relentless. Paul constantly battled these forms and rituals to keep the gospel of grace at the center. It is this gospel of the Kingdom which welcomes the Spirit of Christ within the body and produces grace among the people. I remind you of an early scripture, *"For the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Romans 14:17-19).

The point Paul is making in Romans 14 regards the strain believers were putting on one another to be holy and godly. Satan's messengers constituted holiness by what they could and could not eat. Paul said righteousness is not in food; it is in Christ. Righteousness is not in prohibitions and self-denial; this may make a pharisee but never a Christian.