

The **GOSPEL** *Without* **RELIGION**

By Charles Pinkney

GWR 05

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Denominational Empires become Worldly Kingdoms

When Religion Becomes a Worldly Empire

Jesus when asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, answered; The kingdom of God is not coming in a way that can be observed; (21) nor will they say, Look, here it is! or there it is! For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you. (Luke 17:20 - Luke 17:21 20)

Religion (as church denominations) are the best known expressions of Christian religious institutions. Why were holy wars or religious wars fought? Why did reformations and counter reformations occur that saw nations pitted against nation, and men and women pronounced heretic to be imprisoned in chains, and executed by fire or by ax?

Worldly power and dominion were absolutely NOT what Jesus planned to actualize his kingdom. Jesus clearly stated to Pilate the Roman governor, just before he was crucified, "*my kingdom is not of this world, if it were my followers would fight.*" A future time is coming when **the perfect** will have come. In that day the perfect will include the personal physical rule of Christ over an earthly kingdom. Jesus reiterated to Pilate, "*Now, my kingdom is Not Of This World!*" Yet, earthly kingdoms have usurped the purposes and desires of the Lord. The growth of institutional Christianity as a political, economic and social power began quickly after the earliest years of the faith. The life of God, along with truth and simplicity of the Gospel began to dissolve. Individual centers of fellowship were once Spirit led and non formalistic. The immediacy of first hand Holy Spirit revelation and Spiritual fellowship gave way to religious structure and formalism. The form and power of the Book of Acts church faded from existence. When religion became bereft of spiritual understanding and becomes empowered as a political force, it does its ugliest, most evil work. That house became divided and raged against itself. "The Spirit of Truth is exchanged for a lie. The 'Right Spirit' is exchanged for the spirit of pride, vengeance and retribution the very spirit of murder.

Satan a spiritual opportunist seeking opportunity to usurp rulership of the church. Demonically inspired doctrines creep in and a house is divided. Vanity reigns in gaudy splendor. and individuals ruled over the ordinary believer. Religious empires defend their power in an orgy of blood-letting. Men come against others, maybe their own brothers, to destroy one another in the name of God.

The wisdom and counsel of God's Word was abandoned when men and nations began to create worldly kingdoms and called them God's kingdom? The Kingdom of God and Truth was exchanged for something without eternal substance. "My kingdom is not of this world, if it were of this world my people would fight. *But now* it is not of this world." Denominationalism continues to build its own worldly kingdoms. They foster their own "princes and nobles" and rulers of states. They have multitudes of lesser nobles and greater multitudes of serfs who continue to serve the fiefdoms, while receiving nothing more than spiritual gruel that can neither nourish the "inner man" nor set him free. Among the manifold religious traditions that we are so familiar, there are too many departures from understanding of truth. These produce detriments to human spiritual life, liberty, power, and fruitfulness.

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