



THE KINGDOM OF GOD

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Adrian Ebens, 2026

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Today I want to talk about The Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven (same thing). And before we start, for those who are able, let's kneel and we will pray.

Opening Prayer:

Father in heaven, we give thanks to you for the blessedness of the Sabbath. And this morning, our hearts are thinking upon our dear sister Lorraine. We miss her, and of course we miss Pete. We pray especially for Pete with the loss of his mum and for the whole Beddie family, that you would be with them at this particular time. We thank you though that Lorraine is not suffering. She was in a lot of pain towards the end. We look forward to seeing her on the resurrection morning when you call forth your saints from the earth. And many of us are longing to see loved ones again at that time. And we thank you for the blessed hope.

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Thank you, Lord Jesus. You are the resurrection and the life. And we give you thanks, Father, for the gift of your Son and for this truth, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Presentation:

So, let's start with a text, from the book of Luke.

Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God [or the kingdom of heaven] would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; ...

What does that mean? You don't see it with the natural eye; the eye of flesh. It does not come with observation.

... nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is [where?] within you." (Luke 17:20-21)

So, what does that mean? I've written some implications. The kingdom is not territory. It's not armies. It is within you. It is spiritual. It is character. Is that a fair conclusion? God's kingdom is a kingdom of character. And when you look at a person, can you see at once all of their character? You can't, can you? You cannot. You can see evidence of that character in a crisis situation, particularly. But when we're not in crisis, we're all on Facebook – put up pictures we want people to see and we hide (not always).

So, this is important. The kingdom of God is a kingdom of character. It is spiritual. As it says in Romans 7, "the law is spiritual." And we know that the law is a transcript of God's character. So therefore, if it's a kingdom of character and it's spiritual, then this is something that is within us, as Jesus says.

The receiving of the kingdom; now notice this.

"I was watching in the night visions, And behold, *One* like the Son of Man, Coming with the clouds of heaven!

What are the clouds of heaven? The angels.

He came to the Ancient of Days,

Who is the Ancient of Days? And why is He called Ancient of Days? Because He is; He's the oldest. Isn't that a fair assessment? He is the oldest.

And they brought Him [Christ] near before Him. Then...

When is "then?" When is this? When is this verse talking about? Daniel seven, time of the judgment? 1844. Then He was given the kingdom. Now, hang on a minute. Why does He have to wait until 1844 to receive the kingdom? To know the Father's character. This is an important point, isn't it? Notice, "then was given to him" what? Dominion.

Did Caesar have dominion? But what type of dominion did Caesar have? Territory? The end of a sword. How long can a kingdom like that last?

Audience: Not long, we're about to find out. Until someone comes along with a bigger sword.

Pr. Adrian: Until someone comes along with a bigger sword. This is an important point. He was given dominion and glory. What is glory? Character.

Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, That all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion *is* an everlasting dominion,

How can he have an everlasting dominion? The subjects of the kingdom must give to him everlasting glory and willingly submit themselves to His dominion, not by force, not by threat, but by love. Only by love is love awakened."

Which shall not pass away, ...And His kingdom *the one* Which shall not be destroyed. (Daniel 7:13-14)

It does not, not pass away, because God has everyone under His iron fist and threatens anyone that moves a lip out of place, He's going to

wipe them off the face of the earth. A kingdom like that cannot last forever, can it?

Audience: No, tyranny will fail.

Pr. Adrian: Tyranny must fail; it must fail. What does it say? "There is no fear in love, fear has torment. Love is not made perfect in fear."

And His kingdom *the one* Which shall not be destroyed.
(Daniel 7:13-14)

Why can it not be destroyed? Because it's an everlasting kingdom built on love; agape love. The subjects are all committed.

Notice this kingdom does not appear until the time of the judgment. And that should make you think straight away. That should raise thoughts in your mind straight away. If the kingdom does not come, and we notice that this is the time when the kingdom began to be made up, wasn't it? And how was the kingdom made up?

Audience: God's people, the people that accepted His character, people who changed and asked the Lord to come into them. They became new creatures in Christ. I mean, it's a transformation.

Pr. Adrian: Yes. And all of this is written in the books of record. And as God goes through the books of record, see those that chose to believe the testimony of Jesus Christ, and those that followed the Torah as Moses taught, reflecting the truth of God's character, these names are retained. And the kingdom is being made up by the subjects of the kingdom. Because the kingdom that does not come with outward observation, it is a kingdom of character. So, notice.

Audience: It's interesting, Adrian, at that time, they were tested, went through the disappointment. It began with the testing.

Pr. Adrian: It began with the testing, didn't it? As to whether they would hold fast to what they understood the word of God to teach, or to surrender to the mocking and the persecution.

Audience: It's going to end with that too.

Pr. Adrian: Yes. And then the greater light was poured upon them, and they continued to walk in that light as they faced persecution.

Question, can you come into greater light without persecution?

Audience: It doesn't seem like it.

Pr. Adrian: It's sad, isn't it? And we may not even say persecution. Adversity, trial, difficulty, struggle.

Audience: Well the two kingdoms warring.

Pr. Adrian: Yes, the flesh against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. Can anyone be born into this world without struggle? No, the flesh resists.

Audience: The mothers understand that perfectly well.

Pr. Adrian: Notice, I've made a few points here.

- It is received by going to the Father – not conquering territory with armies.

Christ does not obtain His kingdom by coming to the earth, crushing, and destroying. He goes to His Father to receive it. Does that seem a bit odd. Why would He need to go to His Father to receive it?

Audience: His Father gives it to Him. Because His Father owns everything.

Pr. Adrian: As it says in Hebrews chapter one,

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; (Hebrews 1:1-2, KJV)

Who made the worlds? God. Through whom? Christ. All things come from the Father. All things come through the Son. This is what we are taught.

So, in order to receive the kingdom, He can't just take it Himself. He has to go to the Father to obtain from Him. And why also must He go to the Father to receive it? Because if it's a spiritual kingdom and the Holy Spirit proceeds forth and comes from the Father, He must go to the Father to receive of that Spirit and to give that Spirit "to as many as who would receive Him." It must come from the Father. So, He goes to the Father to receive it. Not by conquering territory with armies.

- It is received by going to the Father – not conquering territory with armies.
- It is an everlasting dominion, which means its subjects are totally free and at peace.

You cannot have an everlasting dominion where subjects are under fear, torment, and tyranny. That kingdom can never last.

Audience: That's a fear of self-destruction. It's self-destruction.

Pr. Adrian: It must be self-destruction. As I've stated in other places, can faith exist where threat of death exists? Can you have faith where the threat of death exists?

Audience: It depends where the threat of death is coming from.

Pr. Adrian: Well, if the one who is offering you eternal life is threatening you, can you have faith? Has to be based on love. Free choice, freedom. And that's why God's kingdom is an everlasting kingdom because it's totally free. As Joshua said, "Choose you this day whom you will serve."

- It can't be destroyed for it is a kingdom of loving character. It is within you. It can't be destroyed by armies or swords, guns, and violence.

As the papal armies of the Middle Ages discovered, they could not stamp out; as the Roman Empire and the Caesars discovered, they could not stamp out the kingdom of God, because it was not based on swords and armies. It was based on love.

The effect of the kingdom. Now, this is from Isaiah 32. It says,

Behold, a king will reign in righteousness,

Who is this king? Christ, the appointed of the Father.

And princes will rule with justice. A man will be as a hiding place from the wind,...

How can a man be a hiding place from the wind? What wind? Winds of strife, of war, of politics, of disease and death. A man shall be a hiding place from the wind. I shall dwell under the shadow of the Almighty. And when His Spirit dwells in me, I then become a hiding place for others. Falsehood, false teaching, false doctrine.

... And a cover from the tempest, As rivers of water in a dry place, As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. (Isaiah 32:1-2)

(as the song says) Then we come to the end of the verse. Now, notice the effect.

Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, And righteousness remain in the fruitful field. The work of righteousness will be peace, And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.

So, wherever God's kingdom goes, what follows? Peace, quietness, calmness of soul. When your soul is worked up, when you feel angry, when you're gnashing on your teeth, is that the kingdom of God?

My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, In secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places, (Isaiah 32:16-18)

So, this is the effect of the kingdom. This is what it does to the human heart under all circumstances. I claim that by faith.

And who enters the kingdom?

"Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
(Matthew 5:3)

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What does that mean? What does it mean to be poor in spirit? Humble, recognizing your need, recognizing your inability. Was Caesar poor in spirit? "I came, I saw, I conquered."

"Blessed *are* the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God."
(Matthew 5:9)

Was Napoleon a peacemaker? Was Pope Innocent the third a peacemaker? He slaughtered all the Waldenses and others.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:10)

Not those who persecute, not those who destroy, but those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness. These are the ones that enter the kingdom of heaven.

And of course, we know this text.

...and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 18:3-4)

Do we comprehend the implications of such a statement? Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? The meek, the humble, the gentle. Those who feel their need. Not the great men of the earth. Not the mighty men, the captains; those that have slaughtered many. Do little children kill people? Do they comprehend what that even means? They don't even know what that means.

Audience: They have complete love and trust in their parents.

Pr. Adrian: Most days!

Audience: It's a state of dependency.

Pr. Adrian: It's a state of dependency and looking, trusting, and believing that your parents are going to look after you and feed you and nourish you. So, this is who enters the kingdom. This is important to understand. And here's an important text.

Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, ...

How would you say that in an opposite way? If my kingdom were of this world, then my servants would fight. What does that mean? That means those who are in God's kingdom do not fight. They do not war. They do not kill. They do not destroy. This is what Jesus says, my kingdom doesn't do these things.

If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." (John 18:36)

And in order to do that and prevent that, they would have to fight with force. And of course, the disciples came to him and said, "Here are two swords, Lord." And what Jesus say? "That's enough?" [meaning that's enough swords]. Or "That's enough?" [meaning that's enough of that type of talking]. Which one did He say? "That's enough of that. It's not my kingdom. It's not part of my kingdom." (Or would he turn two swords into 5,000 swords? Multiply it like bread.)

This means that there is no fighting with physical weapons in the Kingdom of Christ.

"The weapons of Christ are not carnal, but mighty to the pulling down of strongholds," as we're told. And as he said to Peter,

But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

And what place was that?

Audience: In it's sheath.

Pr. Adrian: Where did He want Peter to put the sword? Away. Otherwise, you'll be killed by it.

Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:52-53)

As a child growing up, I would regularly have discussions with those around me. We would talk about this all the time. If a robber broke into your house, what would you do? Hasn't Jesus told us what we should do? What would Jesus do? Pray to His Father to send His angels. That's an act of faith, isn't it? And if you're constantly worrying that someone breaks into your house, how much faith do you have in God?

How is Christ's kingdom established? I love this quote.

The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; ...

Was it more corrupt and oppressive than the government we live under? I think they felt it a bit more than we feel, didn't they? Haven't had people come to the house, kick the door in, and say, where's your tax? Haven't got to that point yet.

Audience: But they have done that, and said, "Where's your mask?"

Pr. Adrian: Yes.

... on every hand were crying abuses,—extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. Yet the Saviour attempted no civil reforms.

You mean Jesus didn't vote for "One Nation" [Australian government party]?

Audience: No. No "One Nation." No protest.

Pr. Adrian: No protest?

He attacked no national abuses, [are we experiencing national abuses? Yes, we are.] nor condemned the national enemies.

Our country is being lured into a civil war context. Isn't it? Manufactured by the sons of Loyola to bring us to civil war, to bring us under their dominion.

He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men,

but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart. (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 509.3)

The kingdom of God is where? Within you. External measures using voting. And the word vote, we might be alarmed to think that voting is actually a form of force.

Audience: Well it is here in Australia

Pr. Adrian: You mean force to vote? Yes. But voting itself is the means of force.

Audience: It's compulsory.

Pr. Adrian: No, but that's not what I'm talking about. Voting itself.

Audience: The government can force you to do something if you don't want to, because the population has decided to give the power to the government. So it is force.

Pr. Adrian: And voting, if you have ever wondered, when the government wants something, when the powers that be want something, they will change the numbers anyway, won't they? They will make it come out the way they want it. Is that true? Yeah, ask North America about that one. Is that why he went into Venezuela? Because that's where they built the Dominion voting machines? Anyway, we won't go into that.

Voting is an illusion. Remember the allegory of Plato, the allegory of the cave. Have you read the allegory of the cave by Plato? Of all the people in a cave looking at the back of the wall and the sun is coming in through the cave and there are a certain group of men, the elite, the Illuminati, who stand on that wall and they make shapes and they create images on the back of the wall of the cave. They create an illusion called "life." And everyone is sitting and looking. And they're watching the royal family. They're watching what's happening to Prince Andrew. And they're looking and they're all, "Wow;" they've got their popcorn and they're eating. An illusion is being created for us.

Did Christ get engaged in these discussions and these debates? No, He didn't. Because the remedy did not lie in expressing your opinion. Everyone expresses their opinion about what they think should happen to the government. And of course, everything that goes wrong in this country, everything that goes wrong in this country is the fault of the government, isn't it? It's nothing to do with me, it's the government. Penal substitution is alive and well. Put it all on the government. Put it on the leadership.

Continuing the quote,

Not by the decisions of courts or councils or legislative assemblies,
not by the patronage of worldly great men, ...

People sometimes say, oh, wouldn't it be wonderful if the great men of Adventism came into this message? Then we'd be somebody, then, wouldn't we? We'd be somebody important. We had great men. What is a great man?

...not by the patronage of worldly great men, is the kingdom of Christ established, but by the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit. [This is how the kingdom is established]. "As many as received Him, ...

Who is "Him"? The only begotten Son, the Son of the Father, brought forth from the Father; Him: holy, gentle, meek, and mild, who did no violence, neither was guile found in His mouth.

..."As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name [character]: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:12, 13. Here is the only power that can work the uplifting of mankind.

You cannot work for the uplifting of mankind through political means, by the use of force, by argument and debate.

Audience: I think too those vibrations that even come from us, when we are talking about those situations, to push those in power to manoeuvre and manipulate.

Pr. Adrian: Yes, react. The very atmosphere of our parliament is an atmosphere of contention, opposition. The Greek philosophy of dualism, of two opposing poles attacking one another and the truth coming out of them. This is completely foreign to God. His system doesn't work this way.

And the human agency for the accomplishment of this work is the teaching and practicing of the word of God. (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 509.4)

I find that statement amazing. So much time spent commentating on the affairs of this world and pronouncing our judgements on the world. And how much does this do to change the world?

Audience: Yeah, it's so much easier to do that than study the word of God.

Pr. Adrian: And to change your character by beholding, receiving of the Spirit. The sword of the Spirit. All those that take the sword will be crucified by the sword. That's the sword that you want to die by, isn't it? That the old man be laid in the dust.

A heavenly peace pervades the soul.

Christ declared, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). While it imprints its influence upon earthly governments, it cannot take the slightest imprint from them without marring the divine similitude.

So spiritual is the character of God's work upon the human heart that receives it that it makes every one a new creature without destroying or weakening any capability God has given to man. It purifies every attribute fit for connection with the divine nature. That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit, and when man is born from above, a heavenly peace pervades the soul. (*Manuscript 1*, 1897)

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There's evidence of the kingdom of God, a heavenly peace, the joy, the calmness, because we know we are loved of the Father.

More elements on the kingdom of God. It talks about slow, gentle growth and change.

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field;" (Matthew 13:24)

Have you ever seen a plant grow by a violent lightning strike and a big explosion and suddenly a tree appears? I haven't seen one of those yet. No, I've seen it. Yes, it goes the other way. When you plant a seed, it's quiet, still, slow, it changes. Slowly it begins to grow and bear fruit. This is the kingdom of God. This is what the kingdom of heaven is like.

Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened." (Matthew 13:33)

Slowly it works through the lump. Slowly it permeates and begins to change and affect the whole loaf. This is how the kingdom of God works.

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches." (Matthew 13:31-32)

So those of us who've taken to ourselves the only begotten Son, we take that seed; and that seed is small compared to all the churches, isn't it? It's a very small seed, and yet it'll become greater than them all. This is the effect of the kingdom of God. It'll fill the whole earth.

So how shall we understand the conquest of Canaan in this light? The conquest of Canaan. This is the question, isn't it? If Jesus says, my kingdom is not of this world, if my kingdom were of this world, would my servants fight? Israel is fighting. Question, is this God's kingdom?

Audience: It can't be.

Pr. Adrian: Can't be God's kingdom, can it? I was in North America, in North Carolina, and went to a big Adventist camp meeting. The minister stood up the front and told the story of Gideon, and many of the wars of Israel, and how they defeated their enemies. And then he turned that story into the righteousness of North America and their wars against tyranny. And they struck up the band, and began to play "Star Spangled Banner." And then he said, we are fighting a war. And let's honour all of those veterans who fought in all the wars for North America. March them up the front. Let's pay tribute to these people. And then at the end of that, he said, "We need to do evangelism. We need a million dollars." He used patriotism to whip up fervour and then to get people to put money in the [offering].

Now, I'm not going to pass comment. I've said enough. But people have used the wars of the Old Testament to justify the wars of current nations. Then if God's people did this in the past, then this is the way that God acts. Notice what it says here.

God had made it their privilege and their duty to enter the land at the time of His appointment, but through their willful neglect that permission had been withdrawn. Satan had gained his object in preventing them from entering Canaan; and now he urged them on to do the very thing, in the face of the divine prohibition, which they had refused to do when God required it. Thus the great deceiver gained the victory by leading them to rebellion the second time. They had distrusted the power of God to work with their efforts in gaining possession of Canaan; yet now they presumed upon their own strength to accomplish the work independent of divine aid. "We have sinned against the Lord," they cried; "we will go up and fight, according to all that the Lord our God commanded us." Deuteronomy 1:41. So terribly blinded had they become by transgression. The Lord had never commanded them to "go up and fight." [That's a specific statement for that story. Now a general statement.] It was not His purpose that they should gain the land

by warfare, but by strict obedience to His commands. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 392.3)

And we've talked about this in the past. If God's kingdom is a kingdom of character and Spirit, and if that Spirit was abiding in the souls of the Israelites, then when they walked into Canaan, it would be like when Jesus walked into the temple with all the rabble that was there. What did Jesus have to do just to cleanse the temple?

Audience: Just walk in there. Turn up.

Pr. Adrian: Turn up and He said, "This is my Father's house. Make it not a den of thieves." And they all left. Israel could have done exactly the same thing. So that the little children amongst the Canaanites might have come and sat at his feet and repented and asked for forgiveness. And those who refused to repent would have fled and left. Wouldn't that have been a much better way?

And as I've said before, is it a promised land? When an Israelite soldier, after having gone through a genocide in entire populations, as he sleeps at night and he sees in vivid detail the picture of his large sword going through the body of a small child. Is that the promised land? That is a living hell. That is not the promised land. "My kingdom is not of this world. Therefore, my servants do not fight." It didn't have to be this way, but Israel wouldn't listen.

When God spoke from Mount Sinai, they said, "Do not let God speak to us. Let Moses speak to us. Don't let God speak to us." And God had said to them, "If you listen to my voice, then you have kept my covenant." They wouldn't listen to His voice. So, they broke the covenant. And they said, "All that the Lord has said, we will do." God said, "I will drive out the inhabitants from before you." "No, we're going to do it. We're going to drive them out. Actually, we're going to drive them into the ground." That's what they understood.

Now, here is a Christian website. I asked the question, why did God order the Canaanites' extermination? I didn't specifically ask that question. I said, well, why did God want them to kill the Canaanites or

destroy the Canaanites? So here is some rationale for why, as one Christian source indicates, why the Canaanites had to die.

Why did God order the Canaanites' extermination?

Historical Background

The events surrounding the command to remove the Canaanites (cf. Deuteronomy 20:16-18) took place during Israel's entrance into the Promised Land. The people living in Canaan were generally descendants of Canaan, Noah's grandson (Genesis 10:15-19). Over the generations, their culture and religious practices diverged sharply from those of the worshipers of the God of Israel.

Did it diverge sharply? Was there a sharp distinction between what the Israelites were doing and the Canaanites were doing? Or the Egyptians? When they're in Egypt, did they differ greatly? Some, a remnant, a tiny amount, but most of them differed hardly at all.

During Israel's sojourn in Egypt and the subsequent Exodus, the Canaanite city-states continued to develop practices including the worship of multiple deities like Baal and Ashtoreth.

Did Israel worship Baal and Asherah? Yes, they did.

Excavations (such as those around Ugarit) have provided insight into Canaanite religion: texts discovered in Ras Shamra describe rituals that included extreme forms of idolatry.

Is any idolatry not extreme? I think I know what they mean in terms of violence and immorality.

This background matters because God's instructions in Scripture point to moral, rather than merely territorial, concerns.

Moral Condition of the Canaanites

One of the distinctions in the biblical narrative is the ongoing pattern of grievous sin in Canaan. According to Genesis 15:16, God delayed Israel's conquest until "the iniquity of the Amorites" had

reached its full measure. The Canaanites' transgressions included child sacrifice, ...

Did Israel participate in child sacrifice? We'll look at some text on that soon.

... ritual prostitution,

Did Israel engage in prostitution? What happened at Baal Peor?

and occult practices (cf. Deuteronomy 18:9-10).

Were Israelites involved in occult practices? Some. The golden calf.

Archaeological findings in regions associated with Canaanite worship (e.g., high places near Gezer) corroborate evidence of child sacrifices, which both ancient and modern historians have documented.

The biblical emphasis is that this was not a minor infraction. It was a culture thoroughly devoted to idolatry and violence.

Hang on. So, this is a culture devoted to violence. So how are we going to deal with their violence problem? With violence. Is there any kind of disconnect here?

Passages like Leviticus 18:24-25 warn: "Do not defile yourselves by any of these practices... the land has become defiled." The context underscores the severity of their actions and the rationale for judgment.

So, there's the rationale.

Israel's condition. Notice this statement.

While the Israelites were in Egyptian bondage, they were surrounded with idolatry. The Egyptians had received traditions in regard to sacrificing. They did not acknowledge the existence of the God of Heaven. They sacrificed to their idol gods. With great pomp and ceremony they performed their idol worship. They erected altars to the honor of their gods, and they required even their own

children to pass through the fire...Even some of the children of Israel had so far degraded themselves as to practice these abominations, (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 1, p. 268)

They were doing this in Egypt. Making their children pass through the fire. Some of them died in the fire. They sacrificed their children to false gods. So why would God save the Israelites? If many of them are participating in the same things the Egyptians were doing? Why would He save them? Because of His promise to Abraham. And because there was in that culture elements that could still respond to the voice of God. Not because of these other things.

At Mt Sinai – worshipping the golden calf and engaging in immorality

At Baal Peor – they worshipped the gods of the Moabites and practiced immorality.

They were doing the same things, worshipping the same gods as the other nations.

During the life of Joshua, notice this. Notice, after all the killing, after all the genocide, after all the slaughter of these people who worshipped false gods, what does Joshua say to the Israelites?

“Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the LORD! And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.” (Joshua 24:14-15)

What? You’ve just killed all these people for serving these gods and many of you are still serving them yourselves. What kind of hypocrisy is this? There has to be a different reason than this justification of idolatry and immorality and child sacrifice. Because Israel participated in all of these things. While they’re in Egypt, even going back to Rachel

who kept her father's gods in her saddlebags, on her camel or her horse. Israel is not clean in this. God is long-suffering, isn't He? Because God had made a promise to Abraham and because there was in that culture the ability to respond to the voice of God. No other reason.

Now, *Patriarchs and Prophets*,

After presenting the goodness of God toward Israel, he called upon them, in the name of Jehovah, to choose whom they would serve. The worship of idols was still to some extent secretly practiced, and Joshua endeavored now to bring them to a decision that should banish this sin from Israel. (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 523)

But according as they have now judged the other nations, what judgment should come upon them? The same judgment. So, this is during the life of Joshua. What happened as soon as Joshua and all that generation passed? What happened?

And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. (Judges 2:8-10, KJV)

Has this history repeated? After the Adventist pioneers died and all that generation, a new generation of Adventist leaders arose who knew not the God of Israel. And they bowed down and they served the God of Babylon. They joined with Walter Martin and with Donald Barnhouse and all those men and they made Israel to bow down and worship the gods of Babylon. Is that overstating the case? No. So before we point at them, it comes home to us, doesn't it?

And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim:

The very ones they had just destroyed, they now were serving the same gods.

And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people [which they had just destroyed] that *were* round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth. (Judges 2:11-13, KJV)

It cannot be simply a moral issue why the Canaanites were destroyed. It cannot be because Israel was doing exactly the same things. Maybe not to the same extent, maybe not as pervasive as the Canaanites, but they were doing the same things.

Now notice this, Psalm 106.

And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them. Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils, [That's why the Canaanites would have been destroyed] And shed innocent blood, *even* the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood. Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions. (Psalm 106:36-39, KJV)

So, this argument that the Canaanites were destroyed because of their child sacrifice, their immorality and their worship of false gods is a mute argument. It has to be something else. And from everything that we've studied and what we understand, God allows the sins of a nation to come back upon itself. As these nations had killed and destroyed others, God allowed these nations in like manner, there is a text that says this, in like manner to be destroyed. He allows sin to punish sin. So, God allowed the sin of the Israelites to punish the sin of the Canaanites, because they had gone more than four generations. Because God says, "Unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (Exodus 20:5) and after four generations of a nation practicing a certain sin and not repenting, they become completely hard, impervious to the Spirit of God and they are wiped out. And we are nearing that time for the Western world, under America, under North America. We have

come four generations since American domination. That time is about to expire.

Here of course, if there was a case for the taking of human life in judgment, in moral judgment, here is the qualification. He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.

“Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?” This they said, testing Him, that they might have *something* of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with *His* finger, as though He did not hear. So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, **“He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.”** And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. (John 8:5-8)

Was Israel without sin? Were they qualified to cast stones at others? No, they weren't.

Israel practiced similar sins to the Canaanites. They were not morally superior. The worshipped idols, committed immorality and sacrificed their children to false gods. How can they be qualified to destroy the Canaanites?

First take the log out of your own eye.

So, it has to be something else. So, the question is, were Israel in the kingdom of heaven? And does this explain why Jesus did not receive the kingdom until 1844? They were not actually in the kingdom. They were invited to the wedding. Jesus says they were invited to the wedding, but none of them came. So, they had to go and invite others to come to the wedding because none of them would come.

Jesus answered, **“My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight,** so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.” (John 18:36)

The act of fighting in the flesh excludes the fighter from the kingdom of God by Christ's definition.

Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us [today] was the gospel preached, as well as unto them [Israel]: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.
(Hebrews 4:1-3, KJV)

We're entering into what? Rest. Because the kingdom of God is a kingdom of character. And what is the effect of that kingdom? Peace, calmness, assurance, rest. Entering into rest. A rest from war, a rest from violence.

Just again, just briefly, I'll just touch on this. The example of John the Baptist. These amazing words that Jesus spoke.

Verily I say unto you, 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.**
(Matthew 11:11, KJV)

What does that say? He wasn't in the kingdom of heaven. He was calling people to come to the kingdom. He was a friend of the bridegroom, but he actually wasn't in the kingdom.

Audience: Are you saying John the Baptist wasn't actually in the kingdom?

Pr. Adrian:

Like the Saviour's disciples, **John the Baptist did not understand the nature [character] of Christ's kingdom.** He expected Jesus to take the throne of David; and as time passed, and the Saviour made no claim to kingly authority, John became perplexed and troubled. He had declared to the people that in order for the way to be

prepared before the Lord, the prophecy of Isaiah must be fulfilled; the mountains and hills must be brought low, the crooked made straight, and the rough places plain. He had looked for the high places of human pride and power to be cast down. He had pointed to the Messiah as the One whose fan was in His hand, and who would thoroughly purge His floor, who would gather the wheat into His garner, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. [He thought He would take the kingdom by violence.] **Like the prophet Elijah, in whose spirit and power he had come to Israel, he looked for the Lord to reveal Himself as a God that answereth by fire.** (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 215.2)

And because he didn't do this [answer by fire], John the Baptist came to the point saying, "Are you actually the Messiah? You're not the Messiah I'm looking for. I'm looking for a different Messiah to you." But in prison, (2 pages later, *The Desire of Ages*, page 217), John realizes the truth; and he realizes what the kingdom is, and then he comes into the kingdom just before he dies.

Audience: He enters the new covenant.

Pr. Adrian: He entered the new covenant just before he died. You, see? So, this is important.

But wasn't Joshua a faithful servant? After Israel told God they didn't want to hear His voice at Mt Sinai and they told God that all of His promises to them, they would fulfil, God had to condescend to do things their way.

Still the patriarch [Abraham] begged for some visible token as a confirmation of his faith and as an evidence to after-generations that God's gracious purposes toward them would be accomplished. **The Lord condescended to enter into a covenant with His servant, employing such forms as were customary among men for the ratification of a solemn engagement.** (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 137)

And in this case, God gave the Canaanites as a ransom for Israel. Meaning, in order for Israel to survive, because they refused to come into His covenant, He had to allow the Canaanites to be wiped out to keep Israel alive. Therefore, the Canaanites became the penal substitution for the Israelites to stay alive. It's a deeper concept, but do you get it?

For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour:

I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

(Isaiah 43:3, KJV)

It's the same principle. And as I've presented in previous presentations, if the Canaanites were given as a ransom, and if Christ feels all the suffering of humanity, did Christ suffer in the genocide of the Canaanites?

Audience: Yes.

Pr. Adrian: Therefore, Christ was crucified, even though they brought it on themselves, even though they did this to themselves, even though their actions caused this to happen to them. And you say, well, you made your bed, so you're lying in it now.

Audience: They're still His children.

Pr. Adrian: But they're still His children. Even though they don't acknowledge Him as God, even though they don't acknowledge Him, He still created them, He still gives them life. And so therefore, Christ was crucified in the sufferings and genocide of the Canaanites, but this was the only way to save Israel and to keep them alive. There was no other way he could keep them alive. Otherwise, they would have been wiped out. I mean, if God didn't protect Israel, the Canaanites would have obliterated them and did to them what Israel did to the Canaanites. They would have disappeared from the face of the earth. There was no way out, except that God gave the Canaanites as a ransom for Israel to stay alive.

Now you have a context for how this could take place, and yet they still not be in the kingdom of heaven.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

God did not forsake Israel, He walked with them in their wrong understanding seeking to bring them into the kingdom. Some lived up to the light they understood and will be saved. But as they were in a wrong kingdom framework, most of them did not enter into God's rest or peaceful kingdom.

Elisha understood, didn't he? When the king said, "shall I smite them, father, shall I smite them?" He said, "feed them."

Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: ... (Romans 12:20, KJV)

This is the kingdom of heaven.

So, in conclusion:

- The Kingdom of Heaven is a kingdom of Character
- It does not come without outward observation.
- Its effect is peace and assurance forever.
- Christ's subjects therefore do not fight or use violence.
- Israel was not without sin and practiced many of the same sins as the Canaanites. God could not use them to destroy the Canaanites in that context.
- Israel said, "All that the Lord has said we will do" and they wanted to take the land of Canaan by force. God accommodated them in an effort to show them the futility of what they did and lead them to His character. (And, as I said, to provide a ransom for them to stay alive).
- God wanted His people to cleanse Canaan like Jesus cleansed the temple. The character of His people would cause the inhabitants to repent or flee.

So hopefully that's given you some food for thought as to what the kingdom of heaven is, and why Christ did not receive the kingdom until 1844. Because it wasn't His kingdom before.

Audience: We can destroy our enemies with showing kindness and turn them to a friend.

Pr. Adrian: Turn them to a friend, that's the best way to destroy your enemy. All right; shall we pray?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Father in heaven, we thank you for your great love and your kindness to us. Thank you for helping us as we dig into the Scriptures to understand what is the kingdom of heaven? What is the kingdom of God? How does this kingdom operate? How do we come into this kingdom? And how does Israel relate to this kingdom?

Father, thank you for your accommodation. Thank you that you were so long suffering. You endured all of that genocide, all of that slaughter, all of those horrible things that happened to all these nations that they had brought upon themselves. You endured all of that to keep a seed alive and to bring to the point where Christ might come and show us the true kingdom of the Father. We want to enter into that kingdom to be just like Jesus.

We thank you, Father, in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Jesus tells Pilate what the Kingdom of God is not:

"Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." John 18:36

But He also tells us in several places what it is, including this important statement:

"The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you." Luke 17:20,21

God's kingdom is a kingdom of character and there is no fighting in this kingdom using carnal or physical weapons. Its principles are like seeds that gently grow in the soil of the heart.

How then do we explain the conquest of Canaan and all the fighting of the Israelites in the Old Testament. These questions are addressed in this presentation.