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The Dispensational View of the Kingdom of God

The only possible conclusion is that ADONAI will establish the Fifth Empire, His own Messianic Kingdom, after the four Gentile empires have run their course.

As Arnold Fruchtenbaum relates in his commentary on **Dani'el**, all forms of replacement theology, such as covenant theology, amillennialism, and postmillennialism (also see the commentary on **Galatians, to see link click Ak - The Hebrew Roots Movement: A Different Gospel**), identify **the Fifth Kingdom** as the Church, and not **Isra'el**. They wrongly assert that this Kingdom was established at the time of **Messiah's** First Coming. Augustine of Hippo (354 AD to 430 AD) was one of the most influential early theologians who emphasized this idea. In his book *The City of God*, he wrote, "Therefore, the Church even now is the Kingdom of **Christ**, and the Kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, even now **His** saints reign with **Him**."¹⁰⁵ Augustine's teaching on this subject was foundational in the development of replacement theology. It was the basis upon which later authors constructed the medieval theory of the state church.

A variant of Augustine's teaching is seen in the writings of Joseph Mede (1586-1638 AD), a biblical scholar and specialist in Hebrew studies from England. He interpreted **Dani'el's** kingdoms as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. However, when he came to **the Fifth Empire** (see **Bg - The Fifth Empire: The Kingdom of God**), he made a distinction between the stone and the mountain in **Dani'el 2**. Mede tried to go around the obvious by identifying two stages of **the Fifth Empire**. His work became a classic in the field of prophetic interpretation. But to arrive at the conclusion that the Church is **the Kingdom of God**, one must read one's own theology into **Dani'el 2:36-45**.

There are several excellent biblical reasons to take this Dispensationalist viewpoint. **First**, the establishment of **the Kingdom of God** parallels the establishment of the other four empires in that it will also be set up on the earth. In replacement theology, **the Kingdom** is usually viewed as being in heaven.

Second, the Kingdom of God will be established **in the days of the ten kings (2:44)**, meaning **in the days of the Great Tribulation** (see [Be - The One World Government Stage](#)). According to **Acts 2**, the Church began in the first century. At that time, **the Fourth Empire** was in its first, not its fourth stage. **The Roman Empire** ruled the entire known world (see [Bc - The United Stage](#)). Yet, **Dani’el** declared the time when **ADONAI** would set up **His Kingdom** as being in **the days of the ten kings**. Therefore, **the Fifth Empire, the Kingdom of God**, would come only after **the Fourth Empire** had run its course, not at the time of **the Roman Empire**.

Third, Dani’el stated clearly that **the Kingdom of God** would bring a decisive end to all of **the Gentile Empires**. The Church does not fit this description. At **His First Coming, Yeshua** did not smash **the Roman Empire** into pieces. On the contrary, **He** was executed under Roman law. After the resurrection and ascension, **Rome** remained in control of **Isra’el**, and **the times of the Gentiles** (see [Ao - The Times of the Gentiles](#)) continued on through **Acts 2** to the present day.

Fourth, the Fifth Kingdom is described as conquering the entire world quickly and decisively. The Church has not and will not perform this action.



Fifth, the Kingdom of God is further described as subduing the entire planet. It is described as a theocracy. The invisible Church (composed of only believers) has

never been a political organization. However, the visible church (composed of only believers and unbelievers), even in its outward form, is required by Scripture to be subject to Caesar. The verse: **Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's (Matthew 22:21)** summarizes the relationship between the visible church, secular government, and society. **Dani'el's** description of **the Kingdom of God** is vastly different. Unlike the visible church, **God's Kingdom** will remove all other empires and become the absolute authority on the earth.

Sixth, if the invisible Church had ever attempted to seize political control of the entire world, it would have had to do so gradually due to its reliance on its own growth. In the first century, the number of believers increased, but not exponentially. Even as the invisible Church was gradually replaced in number by the visible church, the events of the last seventeen centuries simply cannot be compared to **Dani'el's** description of **the Fifth Kingdom**. **Dani'el 2:44-45** says this **Kingdom** will overthrow its predecessor suddenly and decisively.

Seventh, amillennialism and other forms of replacement theology have to teach that it is the Church that will overcome **the Gentile Kingdoms**. Yet, the Church did not do so in the first century, and it is losing ground in the twenty-first century.

Eighth, in **verses 2:34-35**, **Dani'el** explained that **the Rock would strike the statue on its feet of iron and clay, smashing them to pieces, and becoming a huge mountain, growing continuously until it filled the whole earth (2:34-35b)**. But spreading the Gospel by force is inconsistent with the ethics of the B'rit Chadashah. Believers proclaim the Gospel, but do not beat people over the head with it. **ADONAI** wants us to choose **Him** because we want to, not because we have to. **He** gives every person the free will to reject or accept **Him**.

In summary, the invisible Church made up of believers, cannot be the Kingdom of God as described in Dani'el 2. Contextually, exegetically, and otherwise, it is impossible. Hence, to assert that the Fifth Empire, the Kingdom of God, is the invisible Church of today is to impose one's own theology on the text.¹⁰⁶