

The Gospel of the Kingdom

By David Phillips

During the final three years of Jesus' life all of His efforts were spent teaching and preaching the gospel of the kingdom. Concerning this kingdom Jesus revealed more than any prophet prior to His arrival. Within His gospel Jesus proclaimed that the kingdom was "at hand" ([Matthew 4:17](#)). In light of this He commanded all men to repent. He taught men how to enter into the kingdom and how to live as citizens in that kingdom. This gospel was of such great importance that Jesus was still teaching His disciples about it even after His resurrection ([Acts 1:3](#)). When Jesus ascended into heaven His gospel remained with men for He promised His disciples saying, "*And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come*" ([Matthew 24:14](#)).

We see therefore that the gospel of the kingdom is not a thing to be lightly considered, for it is a message that all must hear and obey if they desire salvation. For this reason we must consider the nature of that kingdom, the requirements God places upon those who desire to become citizens, and what it takes to live as a citizens in the kingdom of heaven.

The Glory Of The Kingdom

In Matthew 13 Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven using parables to help us understand its nature. In [Matthew 13:44](#) Jesus illustrated it as a "hidden treasure." The parable reads, "*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.*" This passage, among many others, illustrates the great beauty, glory, and value of the kingdom of heaven. It is pictured as a treasure so valuable that those who find it will be willing to give up everything in order to attain it. Many people seek some sort of treasure which eventually perishes with time and use. But the Bible shows us that those who put their hope in the kingdom of heaven will have a reward that will never be destroyed. Such is the description we find in [Daniel 2](#). "*And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold -- the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure*" ([Daniel 2:44-45](#)). This kingdom was established by God and not by the hands of men; a kingdom that will be greater than the greatest kingdoms of earth. It will consume all and will never be destroyed; it will be an eternal kingdom. All those who enter into it will be righteous and holy in the sight of God for they will be the saints of the living God and the glory of that kingdom will be beyond compare!

The Message Of The Kingdom

This is the kingdom that God had promised to His people for which all of His faithful servants eagerly waited ([Mark 15:43](#); [Luke 2:38](#)). Therefore when Jesus preached throughout Judea "*the gospel of the kingdom*" this was good news indeed; for all that God's people had been waiting for was about to arrive. It is therefore no surprises that when Jesus preached saying "*the kingdom*

of heaven is at hand” all came to hear His message (John 3:26). They wanted to hear more about this great kingdom.

As Jesus preached His message, however, we find that the Jew’s expectation of the kingdom and Jesus’ description did not quite match up. It would seem that many of the people in Jesus’ day had made the same mistake as so many today. For you see, they were looking for a physical kingdom; one with a king that would be enthroned in Jerusalem and that would literally fight and destroy the other kingdoms of the earth by means of human might. One writer describes it as thus, “However, any concept of a spiritual kingdom was overridden among the masses by the erroneous and shallow national desire for the restoration of a physical kingdom -- to rival Solomon’s and overthrow the stiff yoke of Roman domination” (Louis Rushmore, *Historical Overview of the King and His Kingdom in Matthew*, pg. 1). Yet the physical tendencies that filled the minds of these Jews went far beyond their perception of the kingdom for we see that they also used physical things as their guide in understanding most of the scriptures, just as many do today. But Christ’s message was not that of a physical kingdom or of a kingdom that would attain physical world domination. In fact, this is the emphasis Jesus strove to do away with when He referred to it as the “kingdom of **heaven**.”

In His trial before Pilot Jesus affirmed that “*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). Therefore when Jesus preached the gospel He did not command the people to enter the kingdom through physical merit such as power, strength, or wealth. On the contrary, He commanded all to “*repent for the kingdom of heaven was at hand*.” The Jews’ understanding as well their values in life had strayed from that which God expected of His people. They longed for a physical kingdom when God had promised a heavenly kingdom. They longed for physical power on the earth when God was striving to give them spiritual strength that they may join Him in heaven.

As a result the nation had gone into apostasy; they had developed an overwhelming love for this physical life with its pleasures. It is therefore this mindset of which Jesus commands all men to repent if they were going to enter into His kingdom! This was the focus of Jesus’ message on the earth: the Sermon on the Mount, the parables of the kingdom in Matthew 13, His dining with the sinners and tax collectors and His instruction to His disciples. In His message Jesus was not instructing us on how to simply be good people, nor was he giving us good advise for living our lives. Jesus cried out “*repent for the kingdom is at hand*” because the kingdom was coming very soon and if they were not ready He warned, “*but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish*” (Luke 13:3). Therefore, the purpose of Christ’s message was to deliver to us the manner of life that we must obey strength if we want to enter God’s eternal kingdom! God’s heavenly kingdom will reign and men from every nation who believe in the gospel will enter into that kingdom. But if we do not strive to enter that kingdom then we will be lost!

The Arrival of the Kingdom

For three years Jesus preached this message teaching men how to live righteous lives. The urgency with which He preached was just one indication of how near the kingdom was. Sadly, however, many today are under the impression that the kingdom that was then “at hand” is still waiting to be revealed over two-thousand years later. However, Jesus promised His disciples in Mark 9:1 that some of the disciples then living would not see death until the kingdom had come with power. “*Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death*

*till they see the kingdom of God present with power.” Does it sound like Jesus expected His disciples to wait over two-thousand years for this kingdom to come? I think not! On the contrary, **the kingdom has come; God’s promise to the Jews has been fulfilled and Jesus, as King of kings and Lord of Lords, has indeed taken His throne as ruler in that kingdom!** In Mark 9:1 Jesus promised that it would come with power, in Acts 1:8 He promised that the power would come when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the apostles, and in Acts 2:1-4 we find that power begin revealed in glory and in might so that the place where the disciples were gathered was filled with a sound from heaven as of a mighty rushing wind and the Holy Spirit made His presence known! This, dear friend, was God’s announcement that the kingdom had indeed come. This is our proof that all authority had indeed been given unto Jesus and, as Peter boldly proclaimed to the Jews in Acts 2:32-36, “*This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: ‘The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.’*” Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”*

Conclusion

Dear reader, it is Christ’s wish that you take heed to the gospel of the kingdom. This kingdom is God’s eternal kingdom. It has been established and is made up of all the members of the Lord’s church, both past and present. If you desire to enter into God’s kingdom then repent of your sins and obey the gospel of Jesus Christ. All things are ready.

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