

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XVIII

June 21, 2009

No. 25

Thy Kingdom Come

Jerry Fite

The Kingdom, which the Old Testament promised and for which Jesus prayed would come, should certainly be of interest to Jesus' followers (*Daniel 2:36-45, Matthew 6:10*). Has it come, or is it still in the future? Many religious people believe this kingdom is still yet in the future. Yet, when one examines their use of Scripture, their error is evident. Viewing their thought process is also instructive to see the common fallacy behind much of the false teaching that is offered as truth.

Certain passages are used which speak of the Kingdom as our “inheritance”. *“Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God...” (I Corinthians 15:50)*. James reminds those who are poor, yet rich in faith, that they are “heirs” of the kingdom that has been promised to those who love Him (*James 2:5*). The thinking is that since we are still “heirs” of the kingdom, and there is no way that flesh and blood can inherit it, then it must still be ahead of us and will appear when Christ returns. After all, Peter says our “inheritance” is “. . . reserved in heaven for you. Who by the power

of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (I Peter 1:4-5).

Should we assume since “salvation” is to be revealed in the last time? It too is future in this verse. It cannot be something we have now?

Hopefully we will investigate other clear passages that teach “salvation” is also a blessing enjoyed presently. The Lord added to the church daily “such as were being saved” (*Acts 2:47*). Paul writes, “*behold now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2)*. Paul reminds the Ephesians that they “*have been saved by grace” (Ephesians 2:5)*.

The truth lies in the understanding that a word may have a different facet to discover as it appears in a different context.

Salvation *from sin* is a blessing we enjoy now because the day of being saved from our sins by God's grace has appeared and is now offered in Christ. But in another since, salvation *from the grave* is still awaiting us and will

occur when Christ returns. Peter is not contradicting Paul. They are speaking of salvation in different contexts.

The same is true with the word “Kingdom”. The Kingdom, as our inheritance in heaven, is still future. We must be changed; flesh and blood cannot enter into it. But the kingdom is also present now because we are translated into it as we enjoy the forgiveness of our sins (*Colossians 1:13-14*).

The word “kingdom” means “rule”. Jesus prayed for the kingdom or rule of God to come. When he prayed for it, the kingdom was yet future. But when Jesus ascended to Heaven, he became ruler or king over *His spiritual kingdom, the church*. (*Acts 2:30-31, Hebrews 12:22-23, 28*). As the establishment of the church, the *Kingdom* Jesus prayed for *is here now*, and we are translated into it as we receive forgiveness of sins in Christ. In other contexts, the same word kingdom is being viewed as *the eternal kingdom of heaven* which the faithful will enter when the Lord returns (*2 Peter 1:11*).