

The King is Coming – Part Two

Scripture Reading: Acts 1:1-11

In part one of this series we established that the government of Christ's kingdom would perpetually increase and crescendo in peace (Isaiah 9:6-7 – See diagram from Part One). The first phase of Christ's Kingdom is spiritual. It is a Gospel Kingdom during the Church Age. Christ's Kingdom is not to be found in a singular geographical location. His kingdom includes both Jew and Gentile who have been born again, by a work of God's Spirit and the truth of the Gospel. See John 3:3-8; 18:36-37; Ephesians 2:11-22. We are presently living in this phase of Christ's kingdom.

We now will discuss the second phase of Christ's kingdom – a future phase. In Acts 1:3, Luke tells us that Jesus spent forty days, after He had risen, explaining things about the kingdom of God (Luke 24:44-49).

Note: *"The kingdom of God," "the kingdom of Christ," and "the kingdom of heaven"* are interchangeable terms.

See Matthew 5:3 cp. Luke 6:20; Matthew 13:9-11 cp. Mark 4:9-11; Mark 1:14-15; John 18:36-37; Matthew 28:18; I Corinthians 15:24-25.

In Acts 1:6-7, the Apostles asked their resurrected Lord, *"... Will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? ..."* This was a legitimate question. Jesus did not dismiss the question. He postponed the answer. *"... It is not for you to know the times or seasons which the Father has put in His own power / authority ..."* Jesus proceeded, in Acts 1:8, to give them instructions for what they must do in their present phase of His kingdom – preach the gospel to all people on the earth. *"But you shall receive power / authority after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*

But why did they ask about the nation Israel? Were they just stuck in their Old Testament mentality and wishing, like most Jews, that God would break the yoke of Rome and give them national sovereignty? No, they had plenty of precedence, in which their question related to things that were spoken by Zacharias the priest, in the days of John the Baptist, and that had been previously taught by Jesus:

- Zacharias the priest, the father of John the Baptist, prophesied that God would one day deliver Israel from all their enemies (Luke 1:67-79).

- Jesus promised the Apostles that they would sit on twelve thrones, one day, and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. At that time Jesus would be sitting on the throne of His glory (Matthew 19:27-29).
- Jesus promised them that the Father wanted to give them the kingdom (Luke 12:32). This should be considered in the totality of all three phases of Christ's kingdom.

When Jesus was reading Isaiah 61, in a synagogue, He stopped at verse two, in the middle of the verse, and closed the book. He said, "... *this day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.*" (Luke 4:16-21). If we note the last words that Jesus read, it speaks of proclaiming / preaching "the acceptable year of the Lord" (Isaiah 61:2a; Luke 4:19 cp. II Corinthians 6:2). The remainder of Isaiah 61 speaks of a time when Israel shall prosper as a nation among the other nations. The oppressions of the past will be over. Israel shall minister and bless other nations. See Genesis 12:1-3 cp. Isaiah 11 – 12 (note – Isaiah 11:9—10 cp. Habakkuk 2:14).

After Jesus rose from the dead, He taught the disciples from the law, the prophets, and the psalms. He showed them Scriptures that pertained to Himself, His kingdom, and the Gospel. We do not know which Scriptures Jesus taught at that time. But we can imagine that, of all the many times that Jesus was teaching His disciples, He could have used many Scriptures that portray Israel's kingdom and its international effect on the world. See Luke 24:44-48 cp. Isaiah 2:1-4 (Micah 4:1-8), Psalm 2; 22. In John 21:25, the apostle John said, "*And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written...*" See John 16:12-14.

Jesus introduced His kingdom as a kingdom, "*not of this world*" – a kingdom that is established and maintained with truth (John 18:36-37). One day, Jesus will be announced as "*KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS*" (Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-6 cp. Revelation 11:15-18).

The point of this message is not to just teach about prophecy. It is to encourage us to see the bigger picture of Christ coming to us two thousand years ago. This world has been fighting and resisting the message of the gospel. Yet, millions, if not billions, have come to faith in Christ and belong to His kingdom. It is an on-going process that doesn't always appear to the human eye. Many are discouraged because they don't see the realm of earthly kingdoms improving. They feel frustrated, defeated, even angry because of the political and social battles that are going on. But we must keep our eye on the fact that the King has come. He has established His kingdom in our hearts and is coming again to establish His kingdom in the world. Jesus has overcome the world by His death and resurrection. "... *We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.*" See John 16:33; Romans 8:31-39; II Thessalonians 1:7-12; II Timothy 4:18; Hebrews 9:27-28; Revelations 2:25-27 cp. 20:1-6.