

## I Thessalonians 2:10 - The Kingdom of God

### What is the Kingdom of God?

Dr. Alva J. McClain in his book *The Greatness of the Kingdom*<sup>1</sup> lists a number of views of the Kingdom of God.

- The National Kingdom Idea– The Kingdom is only associated with the Nation of Israel.
- The Celestial Kingdom Idea– The Kingdom is simply the reign of God in Heaven
- The Spiritual Kingdom Idea– The Kingdom is in that inner and therefore unseen rule of God over the hearts of men who yield themselves to His will.
- The Moral Kingdom Idea– The Kingdom is simply a matter of ethics, the reign of the moral law over the lives of men.
- The Liberal Social-Kingdom Idea– The Kingdom is the progressive social organization and improvement of mankind, in which society rather than the individual is given first place. The main task of the Church is, therefore, to establish a Christian Social Order which in turn will actually make “bad men do good things”.
- The Eschatological-Kingdom Idea – The kingdom must be seen as eschatological (or future). However this view rejects any future literal kingdom.
- The Millennial Kingdom Idea – The Kingdom of God appears as a government of God to be established on earth at the second coming of Christ, who will reign with His risen and glorified saints over the nations in a literal kingdom for a thousand years.

### The three essential Biblical elements of a Kingdom:

- 1 – A *ruler*, or king with adequate authority and power.
- 2 – A *realm* of subjects to be ruled.
- 3 – The actual function of *rulership*.

There can be no kingdom in the Biblical sense without the *ruler*, the *realm*, and the *reigning* function!<sup>2</sup>

### The *Kingdom of God* may be defined broadly as the rule of God over His creation.

#### Some Biblical Distinctions:<sup>3</sup>

- 1 – The Kingdom is seen as something which has always existed; in other places it seems to have a definite historical beginning among men (Compare Psalm 10:16 with Daniel 2:44)
- 2 – The Kingdom is seen as universal in its scope yet revealed as a local rule established on earth (Compare Psalm 103:19 with Isaiah 24:23).
- 3 – The Kingdom sometimes appears as the rule of God directly to men and other times through a mediator who stands between God and men (Compare Psalm 59:13 with 2:4-6).
- 4 – The Kingdom is sometimes seen as wholly future and at other times a present reality (Compare Zechariah 14:9 with Psalm 29:10)
- 5 – The Kingdom is sometimes set forth as an unconditioned rule based on the sovereign nature of God Himself; yet, on the other hand, it sometimes appears as a Kingdom based on a covenant made by God with man (Compare Daniel 4:34-35 with Psalm 89: 27-29).

“In one sense it would not be wholly wrong to speak of two *kingdoms* revealed in the Bible. But we must at the same time guard carefully against the notion that these two kingdoms are absolutely distinct, one from the other. There is value and instruction in

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<sup>1</sup> McClain, Alva J. *The Greatness of the Kingdom*. BMH Books, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1974. pp. 8-15.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 19-20

thinking of them as *two aspects* or phases of the one rule of our sovereign God".<sup>4</sup>

So we see in Scripture these two aspects:

A *Universal Kingdom* – Referring to the *extent* of rule.

A *Mediatorial Kingdom* – Referring to the *method* of rule.

### **The Mediatorial Kingdom:**<sup>5</sup>

- 1 – The rule of God through a divinely chosen representative who speaks for God and represents the people before God.
- 2 – A rule which has special reference to the earth.
- 3 – It has as its mediatorial ruler one who is always a member of the human race.

This mediatorial rule is seen in connection with three different functions: *Prophet, Priest, and King.*

### **A Parallel** – The Kingdom under Moses and the future Millennial Kingdom.

The challenge to the true God:

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| -Pharaoh – Exodus 5:2                | -World Powers – Psalm 2:1-3             |
| -Miracles – Plagues                  | -Miracle- The Rapture                   |
| -Divine Judgment                     | -Divine Judgment                        |
| -Defeat of Egypt                     | -Defeat of the Antichrist               |
| -Song of Victory<br>(Deuteronomy 32) | -Song of Victory<br>(Revelation 15:1-3) |
| <i>The song of Moses</i>             | <i>The song of Moses and the Lamb</i>   |

### **The end of the Mediatorial Kingdom in the Old Testament:**<sup>6</sup>

Ezekiel 8-11

- 8:4, "...the glory of the God of Israel was there..."
- 9:3, 10:4 "...the glory of the God of Israel went up from the cherub on which it had been, to the threshold of the temple..."
- 11:23, "And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood over the mountain which is east of the city."

Hosea 5:15, "I will go away and return to My place until they acknowledge their guilt and seek My face; In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me."

### **The Kingdom re-offered in the N.T. Gospels:**

Matthew 3:1, "Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand".

Mark 1:14-15, "...Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'"

- This announcement of the Kingdom was supported by miraculous works.
- The Kingdom was near at hand because of the personal presence of the King!
- Even though Israel saw the face of their King, they rejected Him and thus the Mediatorial Kingdom was postponed.

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<sup>4</sup> McClain, Alva J. The Greatness of the Kingdom. BMH Books, Winona Lake, Indiana, 1974. P. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, pp.120-129

**The apostles understood that Jesus would at some point return and restore the Mediatorial Kingdom to Israel. (Acts 1:6-11)**

- The Kingdom is offered again by Peter in his proclamation to Israel in Acts 3:17-21.
- Jesus taught the disciples to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. *Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven...*"  
Matthew 6:9-10

**Who was this "son of man" who presented Himself as the King and offered the Kingdom?**

- Daniel 2 – He is the stone who strikes down the kingdoms of the earth and sets up an eternal kingdom.
- Daniel 7 – He is the Son of Man who is given dominion and an everlasting Kingdom.
- Daniel 7 – He will rule His kingdom with his saints!
- Daniel 9 – He is Messiah the Prince.
- Daniel 10 & 12 – He is the Man dressed in linen.
- Revelation 1 – The First and the Last, the Living One.
- Revelation 5 – The Lamb slain, the Lion from the tribe of Judah
- Revelation 19 – He is called Faithful and True... His name is called The Word of God.
- He will smite the nations and He will rule them with a rod of iron...and on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, ***King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.***
- Revelation 22 – He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

**He says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**