

Lesson 8

Victory in the Kingdom of God-Understanding Kingdom Victory

Now that we have worked to develop our understanding of the Kingdom of God, we want to deepen our understanding of Kingdom Victory.

As we begin considering the idea of kingdom victory, I think it is helpful for us to have a working definition of the word "victory." According to Merriam-Webster, Victory is 1: the overcoming of an enemy or antagonist; 2: achievement of mastery or success in a struggle or endeavor against odds or difficulties. When we look in the scripture the word victory is only found in the New Testament 5 time in the NASB and it is found a 6th time in the KJV (NASB-Matthew 12:20; 1 Cor. 15:54, 55; 57; 1 John 5:4; KJV-Rev. 15:2). The first four verses listed above use the same word, nikos (Stong's Number G3534) which means to utterly vanquish. In 1 John 5:4, the word used is transliterated nikē (Strong's Number 3529), victory. Finally, in Rev. 12:5 nikaō is used (Stong's Number G3528) to conquer, to carry off the victory, come off victorious. While the word victory is used very little in the New Testament, the pages of the New Testament are riddled with the concept of victory.

As we consider the subject of Kingdom Victory over the next couple of weeks, I would like us to keep these words and the idea they carry in the forefront of our minds. I also want us to consider how the concept of Kingdom Victory fits with this year's overall theme: seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Jesus' early ministry and victory over temptation:

In Matthew 4:17, we read, From that time Jesus began to preach and say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near. As we have learned, the kingdom Jesus is speaking of was an everlasting Kingdom, from the Father, that had now come near to those He was speaking to. While John had worked to prepare the way for Jesus, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Matthew 3:1-2), the kingdom of heaven is ushered in by Jesus. Jesus came to the baptism of John, and in Matthew 3:16-17 we read about God's response to Jesus' baptism. The heavenly reaction to Jesus' baptism confirms that Jesus is the Son of God, that God was well pleased with Him, and that the Spirit was with Him as was prophesied in Isaiah (Isa.

11:2; 61:1). Jesus would now begin His public ministry, inviting men to be part of the kingdom of heaven that had truly come near.

After Jesus' baptism, Mark 1:12-13 says, "And immediately the Spirit brought Him out into the wilderness. 13 And He was in the wilderness for forty days, being tempted by Satan; and He was with the wild animals, and the angels were serving Him." We get more detail about the temptation Jesus faced in Matthew's account. Jesus gives us a great example of what true victory looks like. Not only does He show us a great example of victory, but He also shows us His ability to achieve it with the word.

Jesus' example of victory, as He begins His public ministry, should have a profound impact on every person. His method of achieving victory lays the groundwork for conquering every challenge we face on this earth. God, who supplied the very words that gave Jesus victory against Satan, is the same God who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Thought Questions:

- 1. Does responding to Jesus' message in Matthew 4:17, specifically His command to repent, give us victory? If so, what does it give us victory over?**

- 2. What can we learn from Jesus' baptism by John and what did it accomplish?**

- 3. Considering Jesus' temptation, what does it teach us and how does it lay the groundwork for our victory in the kingdom?**

- 4. Which verse(s) in the New Testament are your "go to" passage when you are facing temptation?**