

January 19, 2020

HEAVEN ON EARTH - Introduction

“Heaven on Earth?”

Jesus often taught about life in a *kingdom*, called the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven.

Matthew 4:17 (NIV): “From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.’”

Mark 1:15 (NIV): “‘The time has come,’ [Jesus] said. ‘The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!’”

Jesus never saw a political kingdom as his goal – he desired something even greater, that biblical writers had talked about for centuries.

1 Chronicles 29:11 (NIV): “Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.”

Psalms 145:13 (NIV): “Your kingdom [O LORD] is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations....”

God is ultimately King over all creation, over all kingdoms, over all people, and in the end, His Will will be done.

Isaiah 43:15 (NIV): “‘I am the LORD, your Holy One, Israel’s Creator, your King.’”

2 Chronicles 9:8 (NIV): “‘Praise be to the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on his throne as king to rule for the LORD your God. Because of the love of your God for Israel and his desire to uphold them forever, he has made you king over them, to maintain justice and righteousness.’”

Prophets of God spoke of a time in the future when God would decisively act to bring salvation to all His people.

Daniel 7:27 (NIV): “‘“Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.”’”

Prophecies led the Jews to believe He would work through a new king, from the line of David, the Messiah, to establish a new kingdom, but in their minds that meant God would *reestablish* the Kingdom of Israel as an ongoing political state.

When Jesus came and proclaimed, *“The Kingdom of God is near...,”* while the Jewish people remained under Roman rule, their assumption was *he* would rise up and lead them to defeat the Romans and reestablish the Kingdom of Israel.

Jesus said at the beginning of his ministry that the Kingdom of God had come near, like it was present, but at other times he spoke of the Kingdom as a future event.

Jesus: *“⁹This, then, is how you should pray: ¹⁰Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, ¹⁰your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”* (Matthew 6:9-10 NIV)

Jesus wasn't announcing that the Kingdom of God would immediately be a *land* but a commitment of individuals to God as King with a lifestyle reflecting life in heaven.

With the coming of sin, this world came under the kingship of another being, Satan, and that continues even to today.

Matthew 4:8-9 (NIV): *“⁸Again, the devil took [Jesus] to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹All this I will give you,’ he said, ‘if you will bow down and worship me.”*

The Kingdom of God - wherever God reigns, wherever His will is done

As we commit our lives to Jesus Christ, his Spirit comes to live in us to enable Jesus to reign in us, as the Son of God, and we begin our first steps in God's Kingdom.

Matthew 12:28-30 (NIV): *“²⁸But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can rob his house. ³⁰He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.”*

The action of God in Jesus means Satan is being attacked, his rule is being brought to an end, and his captives are being set free from sin and death.

As the Bible and Jesus indicated, though the Kingdom has come *near*, it's not yet here *fully* in any of us.

Mark 10:29-30 (NIV): *“²⁹I tell you the truth,’ Jesus replied, ‘no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel ³⁰will*

fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields – and with them, persecutions) and in the age to come, eternal life.”

Matthew 13:44-46 (NIV): “⁴⁴The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. ⁴⁵Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

Jesus says pursuit of the Kingdom is literally worth “everything”!

Not that heaven has come fully on earth, but as Jesus taught his disciples to pray, wherever the will of God is done, wherever, therefore, God reigns and His Kingdom is present, the first vestiges of heaven have appeared on earth.

Matthew 4:25-5:2 (NIV): “²⁵Large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed him. ¹Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ²and he began to teach them...”

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) isn't *how* we enter into the Kingdom but shows and teaches us how to live *once* we're *in* the Kingdom.

Join us in 21 Days of Prayer (*Find It page of website, or pick up sheet in Lobby*)

Next Week: Upside Down Just Might be Right Side Up

Get the *Life Journal* Bible Reading Plan at gateway-community.org/Find-it

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