

God's Kingdom is Coming

The Kingdom of God truly is a wonderful prospect, a real hope for the future. It presents us with good news that surpasses all else.

This hope can help you to deal with that most fundamental of personal fears – the fear of death. As we put loved ones in the grave, or scatter their ashes over the rose beds, it is easy to feel that our lives are shattered, and the end is final.

It is not so with the real Christian faith. The believer's firm belief is that there will be a resurrection, as the apostle Paul wrote:

We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51–52).

A Hope to Hold On To

What a stimulating thought! The dead are to be roused from their sleep by a heavenly call, to summon the faithful to stand before the Son of God. There is nothing in the world to equal that hope. The apostle John saw a vision of the kingdom which he described in the following way:

I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor

crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away" (Revelation 21:3–4).

As first century Christians were thrust into the arenas to face wild beasts, or burnt alive on Caesar's orders, this was their cherished hope. Nero is now but dust and ashes, without any hope for the future. Those persecuted will come forth to a superb era where their Saviour will reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. It was no wonder that they clung tenaciously to their hope.

John's description of the vision records the divine proclamation which followed:

He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son (v7).

That is the superb honour we look to, despite the turmoil of today's world. Even today, in parts of the world, it can be hazardous to proclaim a Christian faith. Many believers have lost homes, livelihoods, even families and their whole way of life – even their actual lives. But in the coming kingdom every thought which opposes God will be silenced and the Lord Jesus will reign supreme, with righteous judgement.

This should encourage us to take hold of this hope, to seek to overcome the selfishness and the sin that is in the world. We can do it through faith and with the guidance that comes only from the Lord God in heaven. We must believe in the kingdom of God and the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ.



Signs that It Is Near

When will all this happen? We are given a number of signs to look for. In Luke 21, Jesus is telling his disciples about some of the events in the world which act as signs that his coming is getting near.

Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled (Luke 21:24).

Jerusalem was overrun by the Romans in 70 AD, and occupied by various Gentile (non-Jewish) powers until 1967. An important signpost!

Jesus goes on in verses 25–26 to describe great distress and uproar amongst the nations of the world, fear amongst the population and terror about what will happen to the world.

Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory (v27).

The language here is just like the prophets of the Old Testament as they forecast the future happenings relating to Israel. Let us make no mistake, the terrible things we see in the world reflect Jesus' warnings that it will be a time of trouble such as never was. It is only right that we are aware of these things. There will be no apparent way

out, but the generation that faces the bad news is the one that will see the good news brought to fruition. The Master continues:

Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near (v28).

What to Do?

Having described the signs of his coming, Jesus adds his warning and advice:

Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come on you unexpectedly. For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man (v34–36).

It is a powerful call to this generation. We live in an age of 'couldn't care less', where moral warnings are derided. But we would be foolish to ignore this outspoken counsel. God has given prior notice of what is to happen, and it would be suicidal to ignore His message.

The Bible is a wonderful book. There is no finer. It tells us of the past, the present and a joyful future for all who respond. The Lord is the answer to every person's need, and he asks for our trust until he comes. His blessings be with you.

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