

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 5



THE TIME OF THE KINGDOM

Scripture Texts: Daniel 2:44; Matthew 3:1-2; Mark 1:14; Acts 28:30-31; Luke 16:16; Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9; Mark 9:1; 1 Corinthians 15:23-24

That the kingdom was to be set up in the earth is generally agreed upon. The difference in opinion comes as to when and where. Was it to be at Christ's first coming or His second? Was it to be visible and outward or spiritual? Since Christ did not set up an earthly kingdom at His first coming, many think it merely postponed. The kingdom is not visible and material (**John 18:36**).

In the lesson today, we look at a few Scriptures that prove the Kingdom of God was set up in the earth by Christ while here. It is a kingdom present now and will continue eternally.

MEMORY VERSE: *But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.*
—**Matthew 12:28**

The Kingdom Is Preached

Daniel 2:44 While King Nebuchadnezzar held the people of Judah captive in Babylon (around 600 B.C.), God gave him a dream, and gave Daniel the dream's interpretation. There were to be four great kingdoms in succession: the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and Roman. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, was the prophecy. It was while the Roman emperors were ruling that Jesus was born and lived (**Luke 2:1**). That kingdom shall never be destroyed. This agrees with Isaiah's prophecy (**Isaiah 9:6-7**). Jesus never set up the kingdom in the days of the kings of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

Matthew 3:1-2 . . . came John the Baptist, preaching . . . the kingdom of heaven is at hand. At the time the kingdom was about to be set up, John's preaching was as a bulldozer preparing a building site today. It pushed down the high spots and filled in the low places. This was just what was needed when John was sent.

Mark 1:14 After John's imprisonment, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of God. Now Jesus was beginning to build, or set up, His kingdom. The Gospel of salvation was the means of setting it up.

Acts 28:30-31 Later, after Christ's ascension, Paul, while a prisoner in Rome, continued the work God had called him to—the turning of people from the power of Satan unto God (**Acts 26:18**). He received all that came . . . preaching the Kingdom of God . . . Not ABOUT it, but preaching IT. In his preaching was the kingdom at work, reaching out to save all who would believe.

The Kingdom Established

Matthew 12:28 We know Jesus' power over devils was by the Spirit of God. He said this was evidence that the Kingdom of God is come unto you—present tense, now.

Luke 16:16 The law and the prophets (the former dispensation) were until John, until he began to preach. Since that time the kingdom of God is preached. This pinpoints, exactly, the time of the beginning of the kingdom on earth. It was present then, because people were pressing into it. This was before Pentecost.

Colossians 1:13 Paul wrote that God hath delivered us from the power of darkness—freed us from Satan's kingdom. And hath (present perfect tense) translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. Paul and the Colossian Christians were THEN in Christ's kingdom. It was set up and in operation.

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Revelation 1:9 The Apostle John, a prisoner on the Isle of Patmos, in writing Revelation, introduced himself to the churches as **your brother, and companion . . . in the kingdom . . . of Jesus Christ**. He was in the kingdom as he wrote. The saints to whom he wrote were in it. The kingdom was functioning. This was after Pentecost. There is much evidence that the kingdom was in present operation from the time of John the Baptist throughout New Testament history.

Mark 9:1 Jesus said some standing nearby would in their lifetime see the kingdom of God come with power. This Scripture was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost following Jesus' ascension. At the time Jesus spoke, the kingdom was being built, but was not fully established until the Holy Spirit came on that Pentecost. On that day the kingdom of God came with power (**Acts 2**). See what power the saints exercised after that experience. They also understood the truths of God as never before.

The Kingdom to Continue

1 Corinthians 15:23-24 Christ is coming back to receive they that are Christ's at his coming. They are already His. At Christ's second coming will be the end of the dispensation, the end of the world. When this occurs He will have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father. This Scripture makes plain that Christ is coming back to deliver up the kingdom, not to set up the kingdom. **Then cometh the end—not the end of the kingdom, for of his kingdom there shall be no end (Luke 1:33)**. It is the end of all earthly things. This leaves no time or place for any other kingdom.

The Millennium

The teaching of a Millennium began with the great apostasy. Roman Catholicism has its teaching of purgatory, while Protestantism has its teaching of a millennial reign. The teaching is that Christ will come back to this earth after the last day, and set up a literal kingdom and reign over Satan for a thousand years. There is no Scripture to support either teaching. Both are false teachings which give man false hope of a second chance at some future time.

The facts of our lesson prove that an earthly kingdom is not consistent with the true nature of the family of God. It just does not fit. I do not know where we would turn to find more convincing words than those of Jesus, when He said, “. . . My kingdom is not of this world . . .” (**John 18:36**). But in the face of these very plain words of our Savior, men allow themselves to be used of the devil to declare that His kingdom is to be of this world.

The earth was created by God for the habitation of man in the flesh. It is a literal realm and is not intended for a habitation of spirits. Heaven is the realm of the good Spirit and hell is the realm of the evil spirit.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Where one goes hereafter depends largely on
what one goes after here.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
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