

The Gospel of the Kingdom *By Joel McNabb*

“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:14,15).

What is this **gospel of the kingdom**? When will it come? How do we know it when it comes? There are many questions that come to mind when this subject comes up in discussion.

Just before His ascension, the apostles asked Jesus if He would restore the kingdom to Israel at that time (which meant that the kingdom of God had at one time been on earth, and Israel was the kingdom of God). Jesus told them that times and seasons was not given for them to know, which the Father hath put in His own power (Acts 1:6,7). This meant that, by the power of God, the kingdom **would** be known by those to whom He has given understanding of times and seasons. Jesus’ disciples in the first century did not need to know when, because the **kingdom** was to come at the end time.

How did Israel become the kingdom of God? “Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?” (Deut. 4:34). God brought the children of Israel out of Egypt and was going to give them the Promised Land, but they were not yet a kingdom. So when did they become the kingdom of God?

Under Joshua, they conquered the land of Promise. After that, came the years of the Judges, yet no king. “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). God had every intention of making Israel a kingdom. Even when they wanted a king for the wrong reason, God gave them a king anyway, and they became the kingdom of God. David thought so, for though he was not old enough to fight in the army, he went up against Goliath, who had defied the armies of the living God. So, in the days of Saul, Israel was already the kingdom of God.

In order to be a kingdom, there must be king. The United States is a republic and not a kingdom, whereas England, which has a monarch, **is** a kingdom. God set up a monarchy over

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Israel, and Saul was the king. When he fell out of favor with God, the Kingdom was given to David and his seed, as long as they kept His commandments. As history shows, they did not keep His commandments and went into captivity. Though they were under the rule of some other government ever since, they were still the kingdom of God.

“And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17: 20,21). I have heard for most of my life that, when you are born again, “the kingdom of God is in you.” Let us consider to whom Jesus was speaking. It was the Pharisees. If being born again makes the kingdom of God come inside you, why did He say it to them? They were not born again, and neither was anyone else at that time. So what did He mean by “within you”? Even though there was no king, they still had the kingdom of God. They were God’s people by a covenant, and God keeps covenants. So, unless and until the covenant was dissolved, they would be His kingdom.

In Matthew 21, Jesus was asked where He had gotten His authority. He gave them a parable about a husbandman and his two sons. When they were asked by the father to work in his vineyard, one said yes, and then did not. The other said no, then repented, and did what was asked of his father. When Jesus finished the, He told them (in verse 43) that the kingdom of God would be taken from them and given to a nation, bringing forth the fruits thereof. That new nation will have what it takes to be the kingdom of God. Will we do what we are asked to do, so that the kingdom of God will be established?

The gospel of the kingdom of God is that God will restore and establish a kingdom. “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this” (Isa. 9: 6,7). This kingdom will have a government, where the laws of God will be kept. Jesus said, “If you love me keep my commandments.” And this kingdom’s government will look like the pattern He showed us in the Old Testament. The zeal of the Lord will move among a people, who will bring forth the fruits that will get the heavenly Father’s attention.

In Dan. 2, Daniel tells us when that kingdom will be. “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall

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stand for ever” (Dan. 2:44). When the ten are revealed, in their days, God’s kingdom will be established. Today, we have ten that can be seen: the U.N. calls them the “Group of Ten” or “G10.”

As Christians (if we are not asleep), we should be watching for God to set up His kingdom in righteousness for ever. Jesus said, “Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.” This kingdom will take down the kingdoms of this earth and God’s Son Jesus Christ will sit on the throne of David in the Tabernacle of David judging and executing judgment for a thousand years.

If you are a Christian today, you may have heard what Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” Being born again gives us the ability to see what the kingdom is all about – not that we are the kingdom. We have to bring forth fruit to be the kingdom. We then can see that God has a government and an order just as He has in heaven. Then we can pray as Jesus said, “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” And He said unto them, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” The **gospel of the kingdom** must needs be preached, and not just that you must be born again. Jesus will be King on this earth, and He will have a governing body with Him, as He promised the Twelve Apostles. Jesus said unto them, “Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” There will be others that have left all to follow Jesus, and when He comes, His reward will be with Him. As Paul said, “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”

As a born-again Christian, I desire to see Jesus sitting and ruling in this Kingdom, and if I am faithful to keep His commandments, I, too, may enter into that kingdom. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. My prayer is that you will find yourselves in the same condition, that, together, we may share in His glorious kingdom. May God give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.