

The Kingdom of God on Earth - 1

What is the Kingdom of God? This is very important question in view of the fact that the Kingdom of God is at the centre of the Good News which Jesus and his Apostles preached. This fact is clear by the numerous times that this Divine Kingdom is mentioned in the gospel accounts:

- “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God” - Mark 1:14.
- “Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom” - Matthew 4:23.
- “He said to them, “I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent’.” - Luke 4:43.
- “Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God” - Luke 8:1.

What is commonly understood to be the Christian “gospel” is shown in a modern dictionary as being “the religious doctrine of Christ and his apostles”. It is more particularly understood to be in reference to “the doctrine of salvation”, which is centred on “the death of Jesus”.

Clearly, the death of Christ, in its sacrificial significance, is a very important part in the gospel as it is presented in the New Testament. At the same time we should take note that Jesus and his disciples preached the gospel three years before the crucifixion. But more than this is the fact that during that entire time, while the apostles, “went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere” - Luke 9:6 - they did not expect that Christ had to suffer.

When Jesus told his disciples that he was going to “suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day” the result was that “they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it” - Luke 9:22, 45.

But it did happen, and Jesus was killed, and was raised the third day. The women who found that the body of Jesus was missing from the tomb heard the angels say, 7 “He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again’. 8 And they remembered His words” - Luke 24:6.

When the women hurried to tell the apostles, 11 “their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them.” That same day two of the disciples, met up with Jesus on the road, who said to them, 25 “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” From this it is clear that they had no understanding that the Christ - the Messiah - had to be killed until it was explained to them after the event.

The fact that they “preached the gospel” while having no expectation of the sufferings of Christ, demonstrates that the gospel, as preached by them, must have been something very different from the gospel of modern times, which consists exclusively of the death of Christ on the cross.