

Your Kingdom Come! - 3

Last time we stated that no person who is ignorant of the prophetic facts concerning the kingdom of God can be said to “believe the gospel”. We reviewed several instances to show that Paul preached the kingdom of God out of the prophets. Another one is -

“Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures” - Acts 17:2. The only Scriptures at that time were the books of the Old Testament.

Up to the time of Christ’s death, the crucifixion formed no part of the Gospel. But afterwards, it came to be preached as a means to attaining to the things concerning the kingdom of God. This fact can be seen from the difference in how the subject of the preaching is described during these two different periods. In the gospel narratives, before Jesus was killed, the proclamation is described as simply relating to “the kingdom of God” - e.g., Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:43.

But in the Acts of the Apostles, after Christ’s death and resurrection, the phrase runs, “the things concerning the kingdom of God, AND the name of Jesus Christ,” e.g., Acts 8:12; 28:31. The things concerning the name of Christ include the doctrinal teaching as to how mortal mankind may put on that one “name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” - Acts 4:12.

This involved the teaching concerning Christ’s sacrifice. If Jesus had he not been “delivered over to death for our sins and raised to life for our justification” - Romans 4:25 NIV, it would have been impossible for us to have “put on his name,” since his name would not otherwise have been provided.

This element of “the mystery (Grk., secret) of godliness,” - 1 Timothy 3:16 was added to the things concerning the kingdom of God, to provide instruction in how to access a place in that promised Kingdom. The Good News of the kingdom would have been no gospel to us unless a way had been opened up for our personal participation in this glorious event to come.

This way was opened in the death and resurrection of Christ. The announcement of this fact, with explanation as to the manner in which we might enter this “way,” had to be made a part of the glad tidings. One part was incomplete without the other. The only difference between the gospel preached by Christ before his death, and that proclaimed after his ascension, was that it now included the teaching concerning “the name of Jesus Christ”, in addition to the subject matter of the kingdom of God.

There was no change or modification - there was simply addition. The kingdom was presented for BELIEF and HOPE, while the sacrifice was for faith with a view to the hope. Both went together. They were never inconsistent. Presented together, they were the one gospel preached to the world by the apostles of Christ, as the means of mankind’s salvation. Each one, if presented without the other, has no power to enlighten anyone unto salvation.

The necessity of believing - having faith in - what God has promised, and placing one’s hope in that promise, can be seen in the experience of Abraham. God promised him, “‘Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your descendants be’.” Abraham, although old man with a wife who could not bear children -

“believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness” - Genesis 15:5.