

Your Kingdom Come! - 13

As we saw in Acts 1:6, the apostles expected Jesus to restore the Kingdom to Israel, which was the same expectancy held by the Jews generally - Luke 2:25 "There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation (comfort) of Israel." Strong notes that 'the Rabbis call the Messiah the consoler, the comforter'.

But more importantly, Jesus himself declared to the apostles, "I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed one upon Me, 30 "that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" - Luke 22:29.

So the expectations of the disciples were not mistaken, misguided or worldly. Had they been, Jesus would surely have straightened them out from so great an error. We read of no confessions by the apostles of such error in any of the letters which they wrote afterwards. That is because they never were misguided in this matter, and we find all Scripture speaking in favour of what they were hoping for.

The Scripture where Jesus and the apostles found promise that God will restore David's kingdom to Israel was the Old Testament. From this it is clear that the Old Testament has not been superseded (but rather fulfilled) by the New Testament, even though Jeremiah 31:31 says "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah."

The quotation of this by Paul in his letter to the Hebrews show that this is not about scriptures, but about covenants. As Jeremiah says in the next verse, 32 "not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt..."

Paul explains, "In that He says, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away" - Hebrews 8:13. He shows in chapter 9 that he is referring to the law of Moses, which was given to Israel at the exodus from Egypt.

Of this law with its priesthood and rituals he says, "It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience." Symbolic of what? 11 "But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come...12 Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption," thus making it possible for those of mankind, who, having been separated from God because of sin, have espoused the faith of Abraham, to inherit the promise of eternal life in God's kingdom.

The condition of the old covenant, was "You (Israel) shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God has commanded you, ...that you may prolong your days in the land which you shall possess" - Deuteronomy 5:33. The response of Israel was "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" - Exodus 19:8 - but they failed to keep their word - Romans 10:21.

The new covenant was mediated by Jesus, and sealed by the blood of his own sacrifice - Luke 22:20. This is why those in Samaria "believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized" - Acts 8:12. Their belief makes it possible for them to "inherit the kingdom" - Matthew 25:34.