
BIBLE TALK

This week the question is: **Is it time for the "Kingdom of Heaven" to appear?**

With the recent events in the Middle East men and women are turning to the Bible and pondering the prophecies found therein. Is this true? Does the Bible really teach this and is Jesus about to set up the "Kingdom of Heaven" in the Middle East? Let us consider some relevant passages.

THE "KINGDOM OF HEAVEN"

To begin, let us ask the most simple, and yet, the most relevant:

Q: What is the "Kingdom of Heaven"?

My friend, the very name "Kingdom of Heaven" tells us something very significant if we will simply listen to what it's saying! "Kingdom of Heaven" means that the Lord's kingdom is a heavenly kingdom, not an earthly kingdom! It is a heavenly, or spiritual kingdom, not a physical kingdom!

John 18:36

36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Write that passage down and meditate upon it: John 18:36! Jesus said His kingdom is not of this world! It is not a physical kingdom that will need defending with physical armor! If it were a physical kingdom that occupied a certain land area, Jesus said it would be necessary for His servants to physically fight and defend both Him and His kingdom! But since the "Kingdom of Heaven" is a heavenly kingdom, there is no need for the disciples of Jesus to fight physical wars to protect either Him, or the kingdom itself.

2 Corinthians 10:4

4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal [physical] ...

Again:

Ephesians 6:12

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Note carefully that these passages plainly state that disciples of Christ are not in a physical kingdom and they are not fighting physical wars to defend such a physical kingdom! The "Kingdom of Heaven" is a spiritual kingdom fighting against spiritual enemies.

Since the "Kingdom of Heaven" is a spiritual kingdom, you would not expect to see it with your physical eye ... would you? And that's exactly what Jesus told us:

Luke 17:20-21

20 Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation;

21 nor will they say, 'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you."

WHEN DID THE KINGDOM COME?

The next thing I would like to point out for your consideration is that the "Kingdom of Heaven" was scheduled to come during the 1st century, not during the 20th century!

Matthew 3:1-2

1 In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea,
2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"

This means that the kingdom was close by. It was just about ready to come during the days of John the baptizer!

Jesus was very sure and very definite when He told His disciples:

Mark 9:1

1 And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."

Listen to that! Some of those people listening to Jesus that day would not die until the kingdom of God came!

Now, if John the baptizer was right and if Jesus was right, then the "Kingdom of Heaven" must have come already "without observation" -- remember Jesus said in Luke 17:20 that it would come "without observation."

DID THE KINGDOM ACTUALLY COME?

Now, we have learned:

- 1) The kingdom of heaven is a heavenly, or spiritual kingdom.
- 2) When it comes, it will not come with observation.
- 3) It was close at hand during the days of John the baptizer.
- 4) And Jesus promised that those people listening to Him would not die before the kingdom comes!

The only possible conclusion is that the "Kingdom of Heaven" did come, but just as men rejected Jesus, they now reject His kingdom! Just as the Jews were looking for a physical king and rejected their spiritual King, men today are looking for a physical kingdom and have rejected the spiritual kingdom!

For proof that the "Kingdom of Heaven" did actually come during the first century, consider the following passage:

Colossians 1:13

13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

Did you catch that? The apostle Paul is saying that Christians are actually in the "kingdom of His dear Son." How could anyone be "in the kingdom" if the kingdom had never come?

So then, the kingdom of heaven did come as this passage clearly bears out.

WHAT IS THE "KINGDOM OF HEAVEN"

The final question we need to ask is:

Q: Exactly what is this mysterious "Kingdom of Heaven"?

The Bible answers this question unmistakably if we will only accept what it says:

Matthew 16:18-19

18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

19 And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

Please mark this down in your Bible. Underline it and highlight it. Jesus uses the word "church" interchangeably with the phrase "kingdom of heaven." The Lord's kingdom is the Lord's church!

This significant fact makes all the passages about the kingdom come to light! Since the Lord's church is His kingdom we can understand:

- 1) How John the baptizer could say: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."
- 2) How Jesus could say: "Some of them standing here shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom come with power."
- 3) How the apostle Paul could say: "God hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son."

Yes ... the "Kingdom of Heaven" is the Lord's church. It came over 1900 years ago and has been here ever since. The recent events in the Middle East have absolutely nothing to do with the coming of the Lord's kingdom, because the Lord's kingdom is a spiritual kingdom -- it is His church!