

## LESSON 10

### GREAT BIBLE THEMES

#### THE TIME OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOD'S KINGDOM

In our last lesson we got a glimpse, through the promises of the Old Testament, of God's great eternal plans for blessing the world. These plans were for "our glory" and should be of vital concern to every one of us. We noticed, among other things the following: God planned to send one like Moses who was to be a king who would rule over a kingdom, or a tender shepherd who would have the greatest care for his sheep. This One who was to come would bruise Satan's head, but would be despised and rejected of men. He was to be taken as a sheep to the slaughter and his life was to be taken from the earth. But somehow in the great plans and providence of God, people who would hear the message of this prophet and king were to be blessed through his suffering. He was to be wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. God was willing to let Christ's sacrifice and suffering take the place of our sins.

These and other Old Testament passages give us a wonderful account of the life and work of Jesus. Today we want to turn to the New Testament to see these plans as they unfolded and became a reality. We will also find a great deal more about these eternal plans of our Creator. Let us bear in mind also that we are not interested in speculating about what God's purpose included, but are only making a sincere study of what actually happened as we read the divine history which tells of the unfolding of these purposes.

The gospel writers, Matthew Mark, Luke and John, give so much prominence to the idea of a kingdom of heaven that we plan to build our references around that theme in this study. This seems proper in view of the fact that the Old Testament writers also gave it a great deal of prominence, as we have noticed.

1. John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for Christ. What was the burden of his message? How did he make preparation for Christ?
2. What reference could you give to show that the promised kingdom was not established during the time Christ was on earth?
3. For what type of kingdom were the Jewish people looking? Would they have fought for Christ?
4. On one occasion Jesus was going to Jerusalem with a group of people who thought that the kingdom was to appear immediately. What comparison did He give to show that something must happen before this could be? What was to happen first?
5. What is said about Joseph of Arimathea and the kingdom?

## **LET US LOOK TO THE BIBLE FOR OUR ANSWERS**

In the first part of the New Testament we read of the work of John the Baptist who came to prepare the way for the coming of Christ. The Old Testament had foretold his coming. He preached to great multitudes of people. Notice the burden of his message. It is found in Matthew 3:2, "And saying, \_\_\_\_\_"

\_\_\_\_\_ ; for the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_  
is at \_\_\_\_\_."

Would you understand this to mean that the kingdom foretold by the Old Testament prophets was then in existence, or that he was telling them to get ready because the time for God to establish his everlasting kingdom was rapidly approaching? If we did not know anything about how he made this preparation, we might suppose he started training an army to serve this new Kingdom because all the kingdoms of that time had their armies to fight their battles.

Christ's kingdom was to be different. In addition to calling upon the people to repent and to bring forth fruit showing the genuineness of their repentance, John prepared the people in other ways. Notice Luke 3:10-15, "And the \_\_\_\_\_ asked him, saying, What shall we do then? He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath \_\_\_\_\_, let him impart to him that \_\_\_\_\_; and he that \_\_\_\_\_, let him do \_\_\_\_\_. Then came also \_\_\_\_\_ to be baptized, and saith unto him. Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, \_\_\_\_\_ no more than that which \_\_\_\_\_. And the \_\_\_\_\_ likewise demanded of him saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_, neither \_\_\_\_\_ and be content with your wages." Does this preparation and such instruction shed any light on the nature of the kingdom that God had in mind? Would you say that the people were to prepare for this kingdom by learning to share their food and clothing with those who were less fortunate than they? That fair dealing and justice were to be a

part of the new program? Is this part of the customary training given to soldiers as they prepare for serving in the armies of their country?

In the unfolding of God's purpose, Jesus came into the world and when about thirty years old went to the river Jordan to be baptized by John. After this He started on His own personal ministry. What did He tell the people about this unfolding purpose at the time He began his work? Notice Mark 1:14-15, "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, And saying, The time is \_\_\_\_\_, and the kingdom of God is \_\_\_\_\_; repent ye, and believe the gospel." After He had been in His personal ministry for some time, He sent the twelve whom He had chosen to be apostles on a preaching tour. Notice his instructions to them given in Matthew 10:7, "And as ye go, preach, saying, The \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_."

Was this different from the message of John? Would it be correct to say that John, Jesus and His apostles all taught that the time for the fulfillment of the promises concerning an everlasting kingdom was near? However, after the ascension of Christ, the apostles no longer taught that the kingdom was at hand.

Let us inquire further regarding the time of the establishment of the Lord's kingdom. We have already noticed how Jesus taught that this time was approaching. In Mark 9:1 we have an important statement. "And He said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that \_\_\_\_\_ which shall not taste of \_\_\_\_\_, till they have seen the \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_ come with \_\_\_\_\_." Two points

deserve special emphasis in this passage. First, the kingdom of God was to come during the lifetime of some who were in his audience at that time. Second, the kingdom was to come with power. If we had no further information about the power that was to come with the kingdom, we might think of a great many types of power that he may have meant. The fulfillment of this promise will be noted later.

Now look to Matthew 16:13-19, "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that the Son of man is? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_". And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say unto you, That thou art Peter, and upon this \_\_\_\_\_ I will \_\_\_\_\_; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; whatsoever thou shalt lose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Notice the four things referred to in these verses: (1) a builder, (2) a building, (3) a foundation for the building, and (4) one to whom the keys of the building were to be given. The builder was \_\_\_\_\_; the building was referred to as the \_\_\_\_\_; the foundation was the bed-rock truth that Jesus was the Son of God. The keys were given to \_\_\_\_\_. This is the first time we have had the word "church" used in our study of God's plans. Does this passage identify it as being the same as the kingdom of

heaven? Notice Jesus was to build His church and He gave the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Would it be consistent to think of Jesus building one thing and giving Peter the keys to something else?

Let us recall that Isaiah had made reference to the kingdom that was to be established forever, and Daniel had used the terms "shall never be destroyed" and "it shall stand forever" in referring to it. What statement in the verses quoted above carries the same idea? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does the wording definitely suggest that the church or kingdom was to be built? Or did it speak as though it had already been completed? Would this suggest also that the church is part of the eternal plans of God for bringing promised blessings to man?

Throughout the earthly ministry of Jesus the people were living in expectation of the coming of this promised kingdom. We should notice, however, that their conception of it was an erroneous one. They were looking for a literal kingdom in which the Jewish nation could rule over the nations about them as they had during the time of David and Solomon. We plan to study this more carefully in our next lesson. We should notice, however, that during the height of the popularity of Jesus, the people were so sure that the time had come for them to rebel against the rule of Rome that they would have formed an army to fight for Him. Jesus was not interested in this type of an army or kingdom. John 6:15, "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_, to make him a \_\_\_\_\_, again he into a mountain himself alone."

Just a short time before He was crucified He was journeying toward Jerusalem with a group of people. They seemed to think that He was going to Jerusalem to complete the establishment of His kingdom. Notice Luke 19:11-12 in this connection. "And as they heard these things, He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the

\_\_\_\_\_. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to \_\_\_\_\_ for himself a \_\_\_\_\_ and to return." Jesus was that nobleman who would first need to go into the far country of heaven before he could receive a kingdom. Would it seem reasonable to think that his kingdom had been established before this time? Or would you say that Jesus would first have to ascend to heaven before it could become a reality?

Let us notice also that the night before his crucifixion he spoke of the kingdom as not being too far distant. Luke 22:18, "For

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_." After he was crucified, Joseph of Arimathaea wanted to bury Christ's body in his own tomb. See Mark 15:43, "Joseph of Arimathaea, an honorable counsellor, which also \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. Would this show that just before and after the crucifixion the kingdom was still future?

After the resurrection Jesus appeared unto his disciples for about forty (40) days. During this time his apostles raised again this question. Acts 1:6-8, "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the \_\_\_\_\_? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive \_\_\_\_\_, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and \_\_\_\_\_." Re-read these verses and notice the question in verse six; verse seven is a comment, but it is not an answer to the question, but this answer is given in verse eight. Would it be correct to say that Jesus promised the kingdom when the Holy Spirit was to come upon them?

The full significance of this lesson will need to be developed later. You will find the record of the beginning of this time that God had planned for our glory recorded in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Acts. Devote some time to a study of this. You will find the account of the kingdom coming with the power of the Holy Spirit; Peter using the keys of the kingdom which had been given to him; the beginning of the world wide movement that, in God's purpose, was to fill the earth.

## TEST

1. The kingdom of God (heaven) was prophesied by several Old Testament prophets. (True or False) \_\_\_\_\_
2. John the Baptist preached: (a) the kingdom of heaven had already been established, (b) that he was in the kingdom, (c) that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, (d) nothing about a kingdom. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Jesus preached: (a) nothing about a kingdom, (b) that the kingdom prophesied by the Old Testament prophets would be postponed, (c) that the kingdom of God (kingdom of heaven) was at hand, (d) that the kingdom of heaven was in existence. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Jesus taught that the kingdom would come during the lifetime of some present. (True or False) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Jesus said: (a) the church was established during the lifetime of John the Baptist, (b) the church was in existence, (c) nothing about the church, (d) that he would build his church. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where was Jesus to be when he would receive his kingdom? (a) on earth, (b) at God's right hand, (c) on the cross, (d) in hades. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Jesus never had a chance to become king while he was on the earth. (True or False) \_\_\_\_\_
8. Was the kingdom of Christ to be a civic government with an earthly headquarters, soldiers; exercising temporal powers

over states or a country or the world. (Yes or No)

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Peter was given the keys to: (a) the kingdom, but not to the church, (b) to the church, but not to the kingdom, (c) nothing, (d) to the kingdom and church. \_\_\_\_\_
10. The foundation of Christ's church was: (a) a human being, Peter, (b) Jesus Christ the Son of God, (c) the ledge of rock at Caesarea Philippi. \_\_\_\_\_

**Score:** 10 points for each correct answer \_\_\_\_\_

Correct answers for questions in lesson 9:

- (1) True
- (2) True
- (3) c
- (4) b
- (5) a
- (6) b
- (7) did
- (8) b
- (9) d
- (10) no

List below others who wish to take this course.

