

“The Kingdom of God - Wait for it...”

Matt 16:28-17:13

Scripture Ref: 1 COr 13:12; 2 Peter 1:16; John 1:14; Mal 4”5; 2 Sam 7:12-16; Eccl 3:11; Jer 17:19; 1 Cor 15:51-52; Matt 24:3-13; Rev 17-22; John 14:2-3; Mark 13:32-34

- 1. In our study last week, Jesus had just finished telling His disciples that He would go to Jerusalem, suffer many things, be killed, then rise from the grave on the third day.**
 - a. That must have been very confusing for the disciples, I’m sure that they expected Jesus to establish His kingdom while He was there with them.**
 - i. *(indeed – had He been recognized and accepted as the Messiah, that could have happened)***
 - b. I can imagine them even saying to Jesus “but...we thought you were going to establish your kingdom *here*, like *now*...”**
 - c. So perhaps they needed some re-assurance, and Jesus tells them:**

Matt 16:28 Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

- 2. But - what was Jesus talking about here, telling His disciples that some of them would SEE the kingdom?**

The Transfiguration of Christ - A Prelude

17:1 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; 2 and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. 3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him.

- 3. Jesus took three men – His “inner circle”, Peter, James, and John, up to a mountain.**
 - a. I doubt that He told them what they were going for, because Luke tells us that they were asleep when the whole thing started,**
 - b. ...and I doubt that they would have fallen asleep if they knew they were going to see Jesus in His glory, and get to meet Moses and Elijah!**
- 4. This tells me something – it tells me that “reincarnation” is bunk!**
 - a. Imagine Jesus telling Peter “those butterflies, that’s Moses.”**
 - b. Or telling John “see that cow, that’s Elijah”**
 - c. I think they would have gone back to fishing, and that would have been the end of it!**

- 5. It is also interesting that there didn't seem to be any introductions needed – they just knew that it was Moses and Elijah**
- a. Which I believe is a validation of what Paul tells us:**

1 Cor 13:12 ...but then I shall know just as I also am known.

Peter gets overly excited...

4 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

- 6. Peter, again not exactly operating in “infallible territory”, gets a little excited, and wants to build three tabernacles, or booths.**
- a. In other words “this is awesome! Man, we need to stay right here in this moment!”**
 - b. And God says – no...**

5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" 6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid.

- 7. The glory and majesty of God is such that His voice alone literally took them to their knees.**
- a. The glory and majesty and power of God is simply too much for a human to experience in our temporal bodies**
 - b. I think of Isaiah, who when he was given a vision of God in the throne room of heaven (Is 6), and he wrote that “I was undone” – he was floored by the presence of God**
 - c. He was undone, in that being in the presence of a Holy God, his own sinful condition become terribly apparent.**
 - d. And just as an angel reached down and touched Isaiah, Jesus reaches down and touches these three men...**

7 But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." 8 When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. 9 Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead."

- 8. What was it they witnessed? Only a prelude, a glimpse – a small taste of the reality of heaven**
- a. Yet it was an experience that stuck with them for life, as we see hints of it in their epistles...**

2 Peter 1:16

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

10 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" 11 Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. 12 But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." 13 Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

Mal 4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.

9. This is logical question, since they had just seen Elijah, something big must be about to happen!

- a. **Jesus is simply explaining that Elijah had come in the form of John the Baptist, to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom**
- b. **But many also believe that Elijah will be one of the two prophets that God will send during the Great Tribulation**

10. But all of these things concern the disciples desire to understand the coming of the Kingdom of God – what is the Kingdom of God?

11. Judaism:

- a. **The Kingdom of God is tied to the Jewish understanding that God will restore the nation of Israel to the land that God gave them.**
- b. **That the promised Jewish Messiah will sit on the throne forever**

2 Sam 7:12-16

12 "When your days are fulfilled and you rest with your fathers, I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. 15 But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 And your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.""

12. Christianity – there are essentially three views

13. The Kingdom will be established *through* the church:

- a. This is the belief that the Kingdom is realized when you become a Christian,
- b. and that through practicing the teachings of Christ, and the tenets of the church, we will all become “better and better”, thus the world will become ‘better and better’
 - i. And eventually the world will become a wonderful, beautiful, peaceful place, and the Kingdom is established over time through our good works.
 - ii. This view is referred to as “*amillennialism*”

14. The Kingdom will be established *by* the church

- a. This view essentially holds that through the works of the church and its followers, the world will advance to a time and place where there will be a 1000 year reign of peace, righteousness, and prosperity
- b. And the forces of Satan will gradually be defeated by the expansion of the Kingdom of God throughout history up until the second coming of Christ
- c. And at the end of that 1000 years, which is viewed as more figurative than literal, Jesus will return to reward His followers.
- d. This position is referred to as *postmillennialism*.

15. I see two problems with these two views:

- a. #1 - They contradict the bible. Great liberty must be taken with scripture to come to either conclusion.
- b. #2 - Just look at human history. At what point did we start becoming more righteous and peaceful?
 - i. I mean if we are going to place our hope in the church and people leading the world into the Kingdom of God, man we are in serious trouble!

16. The third view? Simply the view that the bible clearly teaches:

- a. That eternity is planted in the hearts of man – we all long for a type of utopia,

He has put eternity in their hearts Eccl 3:11

- b. That in fact mankind is incapable of bringing himself to such a reality – we advance technologically, but we decline morally and spiritually

"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked Jer 17:9

- c. That at some point in time – Jesus Christ will remove His church from this planet.

51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed -- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 1 Cor 15:51-52

- d. Then there will come a time on this planet when things are going to get very difficult – a time when the plans and governance of man will show itself to be quite inadequate.
- e. There will be wars, and famines, and diseases. (Matt 24:3-13)
- f. The love of many will grow cold – society will be cold and hard (Matt 24:3-13)
- g. The governments of the world will unite under one umbrella, under one leader – the Anti-Christ. (Rev 17-20)
- h. The nation of Israel will be at the center of a conflict – and will be attacked from all sides. (Rev 17-20)
- i. And at the last possible moment – The Lord Jesus Christ will return to this earth, heading up an army of angels, who will utterly defeat the armies of the ant-Christ. (Rev 17-20)
- j. And Jesus will establish his Kingdom – a 1000 year kingdom, here on this earth. (Rev 17-20)
- k. After the 100 years, God will create a new heaven, and a new earth, and He will dwell there with His people for eternity. (Rev 21-22)

17. But there was an interesting phenomenon that happened in the years after Jesus ascended to Heaven. His disciples seemed to be certain that He would return at some point in their lifetime and usher in the Kingdom of God.

- a. Accordingly, they lived their lives with the hope of the imminent return of Jesus Christ. They gave all they had, sacrificed, most of them going to their death, with the hope of Christ before them. They believed what Jesus had told them:

In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. John 14:2-3 NKJV

- b. But, He did not return. Each of them lived, and died.

18. So, what happened? Did Jesus mislead his disciples? Has He forgotten about us? Is He too busy?

- a. Thankfully not! No, Jesus promised to return, and return He will, in the Father's timing:

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. Mark 13:32-34 NKJV

- b. And the disciples certainly did not miss out on anything: When they died, they went into the presence of the Lord!
 - c. And I believe it to be good for them – and good for us to live like He could come today – or 100 years from now – only concerning ourselves with this: If He came today, He would find me faithful!
19. But due to the strange and uncertain times we are in, the question continues to arise, “Are we in the last days?”
- a. The answer is – YES...but! Yes we are in the Last Days, as the “Last Days” began with the ascension of Jesus into Heaven.
 - b. But, there are many things that God has for mankind, up through the centuries, including now, that will bring the timing of His arrival to perfect fruition. God’s timing is always perfect.
 - c. Things are happening rapidly in our country and our world. Things that indicate to me that change is indeed coming; and it may not be the change people expect.
 - d. Global governance is coming, and it only confirms the prophecies given about the world system that will arise.
20. But we need not fret or worry. Our place is not to worry, but to live our lives just like the disciples did – as if Jesus might return any day.
- a. Each day we are given is another opportunity to live out our faith, to touch another person with the love of God, to live for Christ.
 - b. Jesus told us “Take up your cross, and follow me” Follow him where? TO GLORY!

Surrender always leads to glory; First the suffering, then the glory; first the cross, then the crown.

“Oh God could this be, the land of the free... there is only God, there is only one Savior – His name is Jesus!

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