

THE KINGDOM OF GOD ON EARTH

Jesus taught his disciples how to pray to God. He used these words.

Matthew 6:13

'This, then, is how you should pray: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.'

This is what the Kingdom of God is really about. God wants the earth to be very good, as it was when he first made it. He wants the curse on the earth to be removed, so that food is plentiful for all people. He wants death to be removed. Above all he wants the earth to be filled with people who worship and honour him. These are people who belong to him as his children through the Lord Jesus Christ. And he wants them to live for ever.

This is what is meant by God's will being done on earth. It will happen when Jesus returns from heaven to set up God's kingdom on the earth.

Look at what the kingdom will be like. We find all these points in Psalm 72.

Psalm 72

*Endow the king with your justice, O God, the royal son with your righteousness.
He will judge your people in righteousness, your afflicted ones with justice.
The mountains will bring prosperity to the people, the hills the fruit of righteousness.
He will defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; he will crush the oppressor.
He will endure as long as the sun, as long as the moon, through all generations.
He will be like rain falling on a mown field, like showers watering the earth.
In his days the righteous will flourish; prosperity will abound till the moon is no more.
He will rule from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.
The desert tribes will bow before him and his enemies will lick the dust.
The kings of Tarshish and of distant shores will bring tribute to him; the kings of Sheba and Seba will present him gifts.
All kings will bow down to him and all nations will serve him.
For he will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help.
He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death.
He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight.
Long may he live! May gold from Sheba be given to him. May people ever pray for him and bless him all day long.
Let corn abound throughout the land; on the tops of the hills may it sway. Let its fruit flourish like Lebanon; let it thrive like the grass of the field.
May his name endure for ever; may it continue as long as the sun. All nations will be blessed through him, and they will call him blessed.
Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvellous deeds.
Praise be to his glorious name for ever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen.'*

From this we see that;

1. Jesus will reign as King for God
2. The Kingdom of God will extend over the whole earth.
3. No one will be hungry ever again. There will be food for everyone.
4. Everyone on earth will recognise Jesus as the Lord, the King of the whole world.
5. People who are poor and in trouble will have their prayers answered. Jesus will deliver them from their problems.
6. He will destroy those who oppose him.
7. He will set up a kingdom which will be full of righteousness and peace.
8. The Kingdom of God will last for ever.

Many people rejected Jesus when he came to preach the good news of the Kingdom. Many people will try to reject him again when he returns to rule the world. Jesus will not allow this to happen. He will not allow men to hurt and kill him again. He will return with all of God's power to destroy everyone who opposes him. There will be a great battle as the nations struggle with Jesus, but Jesus will win. It will be so terrible that Isaiah talks of it as God shaking the earth.

Isaiah 2:17

Men will flee to caves in the rocks and to holes in the ground from the dread of the LORD and the splendour of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.

In that day men will throw away to the rodents and bats their idols of silver and idols of gold, which they made to worship. They will flee to caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags from dread of the LORD and the splendour of his majesty, when he rises to shake the earth.'

There will be no hiding place for those who oppose Jesus. The rebellion against him will collapse. All nations will be forced to recognise him as their king and Lord.

But there is another judgement spoken about in the Bible. Jesus will judge everyone who knows the Gospel. He will decide if they will be in his kingdom. People who have refused to become his disciples, will be refused a place in his kingdom. They will beg him to let them in. Jesus will say these words about them.

Matthew 25:30

'Throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

How terrible it will be to be rejected in this way; to know that you can never enter the kingdom of God. It will be too late then to change your mind. It will be too late then to be baptised and to promise to serve God.

How wonderful it will be to hear these words from Jesus.

Matthew 25:23

'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

He will say these words to his faithful disciples who will share his kingdom for ever. These are those who have repented, been baptised and lived the new life, as servants of Jesus. When he comes all their problems will be taken away.

The message of the Bible is quite clear. Jesus will come back to set up the kingdom of God. We have to decide now if we want to be in it. If we leave the decision until his return it will be too late. Today is the time to serve God. Do not leave it until tomorrow.

Questions

- 1 Write down six things that Jesus will do when he returns to set up the kingdom.
- 2 What will happen to the nations which oppose him?
- 3 What will happen to people who have refused to become his disciples?
- 4 What will happen to people who have chosen to be faithful to him?
- 5 How long will the Kingdom of God last?
- 6 Why do you want to be in the Kingdom of God?