



God's Kingdom

READING FOR THIS LESSON - I Chronicles 29.

"Your Kingdom come. May Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven"



How many times have you said these words, or heard them said by others? They are part of the prayer, which Jesus taught his disciples. You can read it in Luke 11:2-4. We know the words very well - but do we know just what they *mean*?

Look at them again. They are a prayer that God's Kingdom may come, and that His will may be done on this earth, as it is always done in heaven. So, we see straight away that the Kingdom for which we are to pray is to be here **on this earth**. When God's Kingdom comes, then men and women will obey Him and do His will.

The Kingdom of God existed on earth before

Did you know that, thousands of years ago, the Kingdom of God existed on earth? Turn back to the reading for this lesson, 1 Chronicles 29 and read verse 1, followed by verses 10-13, taking special note of verse 11, which says,

"Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all."

The Kingdom spoken of, as you will see when you read the chapter, is the Kingdom of Israel, in the land of Israel. Now read verse 23,

"So Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king in place of his father David"

The throne on which David sat, and on which his son Solomon sat after him, was **in Jerusalem**, the chief city of the land of Israel. The kingdom over which he reigned was the Kingdom of Israel.

Why was the Kingdom of Israel called 'the Kingdom of God', and why was its throne called the *"throne of the LORD"*? It was because God Himself had given the Israelites that Kingdom; He had chosen Jerusalem for the capital city (1 Kings 11:13); He had given the laws by which the Kingdom was to be governed (you will find them in the Bible, in the books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy); and the King who reigned, was reigning for God.



God's Kingdom came to an end

Hundreds of years passed by. King after king ruled over Israel in Jerusalem. Some were good kings, following God's ways, and some were bad, following their own way.

At last there came a day when the nation of Israel had departed so far from God's ways, and the king who ruled at Jerusalem was so wicked, that God said that the kingdom should no longer continue.

Read Ezekiel 21:25-27, and especially verse 27, which says,



"A ruin! A ruin! I will make it a ruin! It will not be restored until he comes to whom it rightfully belongs; to him I will give it."

To whom it rightfully belongs

We can see from the verses in Ezekiel that someone was to come who had a right to the throne of the Kingdom of God, and God was going to give it to him.

From the day that the last king was removed from the throne, right up to the present day, there has never been an Israelitish king ruling in Jerusalem.

But turn in your Bible to Luke 1:31-33, and read the words spoken to Mary, the mother of Jesus, by the angel who appeared to her. Speaking of Jesus, the angel said,

"He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

Who has a right to the throne of the Kingdom of God? Jesus has because he is God's Son, and because he also was descended from the great King David through his mother Mary.

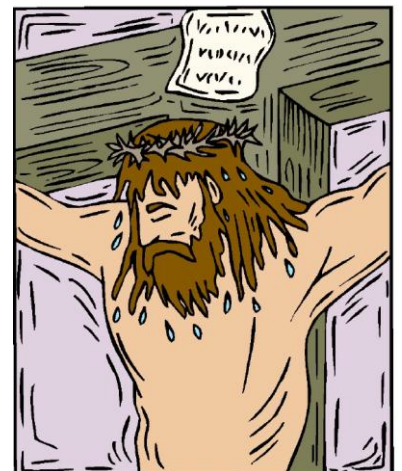
Jesus claimed to be a King. At his trial, when Pilate said,

"You are a king, then!"

Jesus replied,

"You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." (John 18:37)

Over the cross on which he was crucified Pilate had written, "THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Matthew 27:37). His enemies tried to make fun of him (Matthew 27v29) but what Pilate wrote was true.



The Gospel of the Kingdom

The Gospel that Jesus preached was the good news of the Kingdom of God. The word Gospel means simply, "good news". In Luke 8 verse 1, we read that,

"After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God."

Now we can see why Jesus is coming back to this earth. He is coming back to set up again the Kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God and us

Perhaps you may think, "Why, then, should we pray, 'Your Kingdom Come'? If it is a Kingdom in Israel, what has it to do with us?"

As we continue our studies, we'll learn that the Kingdom over which Jesus will rule will spread far beyond the first Kingdom of God. It will cover all the earth, and bring peace to all people, for it will be God's Kingdom.

Jesus promised the apostles that they would,

"... also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matthew 19:28).



This hope is given to those who believe God's Word as we read in Luke 12:31-32,

"But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom."



We also read of those who are given immortality by Christ that they have been made,

".... to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." (Revelation 5v10)

And so we pray, "Your Kingdom come." We also pray that when Jesus comes back, he may say to us,

"Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'" (Matthew 25:34).

Summary

We have now learned:

1. That the Kingdom of God existed in the land of Israel before.
2. That God brought the Kingdom to an end, but promised to restore it to His chosen Son.
3. That Jesus is that king, and he is going to sit on the throne of David at Jerusalem, ruling over Israel and the world.
4. That all the faithful believers will share in the blessings of this Kingdom.