

THE KINGDOM OF GOD sermons by Rev. George R. Fiddes

Sermon 3 - ESTABLISHING THE KINGDOM

The Establishment of the Kingdom

We have already seen that the Kingdom of God is within or among you: it is here. But when and how did it come?

1. The Kingdom of God foretold

Before the coming of Jesus we read in Daniel of the Kingdom of God. There we are told that God would establish a kingdom, and a kingdom that would never be destroyed. "In the time of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed, nor will it be left to another people. It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them to an end, but it will itself endure forever. This is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out of a mountain, but not by human hands--a rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver and the gold to pieces. (Daniel 10: 24.)

We also read in Luke the words that are spoken by the Angel Gabriel in *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. (Luke 1:31-33)*

Jesus would be given the throne of David; and of His Kingdom there would be no end. There are kingdoms that come and go and yet the kingdom that is being talked about here is a kingdom that in essence is different from any other kingdom, one that will never be defeated, destroyed or overthrown.

When Jesus was on this earth He spoke of the Kingdom in such a way that it reminded people of what was being expected.

- At the start of His ministry *The Time has come - The Kingdom is at hand.* (Mark 1:14-15)
- At the height of His ministry *"I tell you the truth, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."* (Mark 9:1-9)
- At the end of His ministry - Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the Kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. The Thief on the Cross and Joseph of Arimathea looked for the Kingdom and after the resurrection Jesus teaches His disciples to inquire about the Kingdom.

It was well established in the public awareness that a kingdom would come.

2. The Kingdom of God Present

Not only did Jesus refer to the promised Kingdom, He took every opportunity to stress that, in Him, and His being accepted by faith, it was present, "among you".

- The Kingdom now exists by virtue of Jesus' authority and rule. He has been given *all authority in heaven and on earth.* (Matt 28:18) He has been *made both Lord and Christ* (Acts 2:36) All things have been *placed under His feet.* (Eph. 1:20-22) All authority and power have been made subject to Him (1 Peter 3:22).

- The reign of God is now administered by Jesus. He is the *ruler over the Kings of the earth*. (Rev. 1:5) He has received *power to rule the nations with a rod of iron*. (Rev. 2:26-27) *King of Kings and Lord of Lords* (1 Tim. 6:14-15); He will *reign until all enemies are placed under His feet*. (1 Cor. 15:25-26)

In the NT story of the early church, it was obvious that the Kingdom was well established in reality. For example,

Those in the church were being called into the Kingdom (1 Thess. 2:12)

They were being *translated into the Kingdom* (Col 1:13)

They were *receiving the Kingdom* (Heb 12:28)

They were companions in the Kingdom (Rev 1:9)

Becoming a Christian meant confessing Christ as Lord (Romans 10:9-10).

The church is the community of souls in whose hearts Christ is recognised as sovereign.

Because of this reality and immediacy, the terms ‘church’ and ‘the Kingdom’ are often used interchangeably.

3. The Kingdom of God Future

The Kingdom of God is both present and future. We have in Matthew 13:40-43 the parable of the Tares and the notion of gathering the good into the Kingdom, but leaving the bad. The righteous shine in the Kingdom of their Father.

In the description of the judgement in Matthew 25:34 when the Son of Man comes in His glory, the blessed will inherit the Kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.

Paul looks to the future, expounds the hope of the resurrection, and encourages believers to live holy lives and be steadfast and expresses his own hope for the future (2 Tim.4:18)

Peter takes it further when he says: *Therefore, my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* (2 Peter 1:10-11)