

The Kingdom of God Is At Hand (Mark 1:15)

Kingdom: “Kingly function, authority or power; sovereignty, supreme rule; the position or rank of a king, kingship.”

- I. In the words of John the Baptist (**MAT 3:2**) and the Lord Jesus Christ, the kingdom of heaven/God was “...at hand.”
 - A. The system of eschatology represented by the footnotes of the Scofield Reference Bible affirms that the promised Messianic/Davidic king and kingdom which the Jews awaited were thwarted by the Jewish rejection of the Messiah and so were reserved to a future advent of Jesus Christ.
 - B. As support for this theory, Dr. Scofield affirmed that one should not conclude that the phrase “at hand” implied a then-present reality of the kingdom.
 1. “At hand is never a positive affirmation that the person or thing said to be 'at hand' will immediately appear, but only that no known or predicted event must intervene.” (Scofield Reference Bible, p.998)
 2. **at hand:** “within easy reach; near; close by., near in time or closely approaching, at the immediate moment; at the start.”
 3. Compare “at hand” with **JER 23:23; 2TI 4:6-7; MAR 14:42-43.**
- II. The N.T. gospel church is the kingdom of God prophesied by the O.T. prophets.
 - A. The terms “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven” are synonymous. **LUK 16:16 c/w MAT 11:12; MAT 19:23-24; MAT 8:11-12 c/w LUK 13:28.**
 - B. O.T. prophets anticipated a coming kingdom of God ruled by Messiah.
 1. Nathan and Isaiah prophesied that Messiah would come through David's lineage and would ascend to David's throne when David was dead. **ISA 9:6-7; 2SAM 7:12-16.**
 2. David prophesied that Messiah would be made King in spite of violent opposition and would inherit the heathen/Gentiles. **PSA 2:1-9.**
 3. Daniel prophesied that God would set up an eternal kingdom in the days of the kings of the fourth division of Nebuchadnezzar's dream image, which would be the days of the Roman kings. It would overthrow the world-empire system. **DAN 2:36-45.**
 - C. There are five things in Scripture referred to as the kingdom of God.
 1. God's general rule over all creation. **1CH 29:11-12; PSA 47:7-8.**
 2. The O.T. nation of Israel. **EXO 19:6; 2CH 13:5, 8.**
 3. The elect, born-again family. **ROM 5:17, 21 c/w COL 1:13; JOH 3:5.**
 4. The eternal state. **MAT 25:31-34, 46; 2TI 4:18.**
 5. The N.T. gospel church entered by baptism in water. **MAT 21:31-32 c/w LUK 7:29-30; MAT 16:17-19; LUK 22:29-30 c/w 1CO 10 & 11.**
 - D. Of the above five things identified as the kingdom of God, which was set up with Messiah as king during the days of the Roman kings at a time when David was dead in the grave, commenced the overthrow of world-empires, saw Messiah embrace the Gentiles as His inheritance and would endure forever?
 1. Obviously only the gospel church preached from the days of John the Baptist as being the kingdom of God *at hand* answers to this.
 2. The apostles of Jesus Christ interpret the O.T. prophecies of Messiah ascending to David's throne as being an accomplished action by the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. **ACT 2:25-36; 4:24-28; 13:32-37.**

3. The church would endure forever. **MAT 16:18-19; EPH 3:21; HEB 12:28.**

- III. The gospel church composed of Jews and Gentiles was foreseen by the O.T. prophets and is the continuation of God's church on earth in a new, altered form.
- A. The nation of Israel was the church of God on earth under the law economy. **ACT 7:38.**
 - B. The national church/kingdom of God under the Law was only meant to be for a season until Christ should come and reform it. **GAL 3:19; HEB 9:10.**
 - C. The prophets were not ignorant of the gospel church age. **ACT 3:24, 24:14; 26:22-23.**
 - D. Though they did not have clear understanding of the manner of the times when Messiah would establish His kingdom (**IPE 1:10-11**), they certainly did speak of the church. The N.T. church of believing Jew and Gentile was therefore NOT a "...not yet disclosed....mystery form of the kingdom." (Scofield Reference Bible, p. 998) **PSA 22:22 c/w HEB 2:12; DEU 32:43 & ISA 11:10 c/w ROM 15:9-12; ISA 56:6-8; 65:1 c/w ROM 10:20.**
 - E. The casting off of national Israel and the grafting in of elect believing Gentiles in their place was also something that the prophets had foreseen. **HOS 1:10; 2:23 c/w ROM 9:22-26; AMO 9:11-12 & MAL 1:11 c/w ACT 15:13-17.**
 - 1. This refutes the notion that the church was a "fall-back" measure which God resorted to because of Jewish rejection of the kingdom.
 - 2. In fact, the opposite is true. God fully expected to come and take kingdom privileges away from them and give them to another nation. **MAT 21:42-43.**
 - F. Gentile believers are graft into the commonwealth of Israel. This refutes the notion of "...distinctively Jewish promises..."(Scofield) pertaining to the prophesied kingdom of God. **ROM 11:17; EPH 2:12-19.**
- IV. The kingdom of God over which Jesus reigns as Messiah upon David's throne is spiritual rather than natural. **JOH 6:15; 18:36; LUK 17:20-21.**
- A. The King sits upon David's throne in heaven, not earth. **PSA 89:2, 35-37.**
 - B. He wears a crown of glory and honour. **HEB 2:9.**
 - C. His sceptre is righteousness. **HEB 1:8.**
 - D. He has ambassadors on earth. **2CO 5:20; EPH 6:20.**
 - E. His kingdom's warfare is not carnal. **EPH 6:12; 2CO 10:4.**
- V. Men ought to:
- A. desire God's kingdom. **MAT 6:10.**
 - B. seek it first. **MAT 6:33.**
 - C. give up whatever it takes to embrace it. **MAT 13:44-46.**
 - D. justify God by entering it. **LUK 7:29-30 c/w MAT 21:31.**
 - E. expect its deliverance at the resurrection. **1CO 15:24.**
- VI. In view of receiving this unmovable kingdom, we are called upon to have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably. **HEB 12:28-29.**
- A. God is acceptably served with reverence and godly fear.
 - B. God is a consuming fire not to be trifled with!
 - C. God is obviously very serious about His church and we had better be serious about it as well.

(All definitions from Oxford English Dictionary)