

HILLSBORO CHURCH OF CHRIST

BULLETIN ARTICLE

H A Y E S'

H O O R A H !

“HAS THE KINGDOM COME?”

(Adapted from R. Rutherford's "Millennial Mania")

That God planned to establish a kingdom on this earth is recognized and admitted by all who study the word of God. But so many today have a misconception on the time of establishment, and the nature of the kingdom. The Jews, in the days of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, were looking for a materialistic kingdom with a warrior Messiah that would conquer the world, and let the Jews tell everybody what to do from then on. Today, so many are still looking for this materialistic kingdom, and do not appreciate the nature of the kingdom of which Jesus did establish. Has the kingdom already come, or is it still to be established as our premillennialist neighbors affirm? Or, is the kingdom spiritual in nature and identical with the church that Jesus built (Matt. 16:18)? Will it be a physical, material, worldly kingdom? Will it be maintained by carnal weapons? Well, friends and brethren, these questions can only be answered crystal clearly from the Word of God (II Tim. 2:15; II Tim. 3:16, 17; Prov. 14:12; 16:25; Prov. 28:26; Jer. 10:23)

THE KINGDOM PROMISED TO GREAT MEN OF OLD:

God promised Abraham his "seed" would bless all the earth (Gen. 12:3; 17:1-14). Abraham was the father of the chosen nation through which the Christ came (Matt. 1:1-17). The land of Palestine was given to Abraham's descendants as their homeland (Gen. 12:1, 2; 13:14-17). Christ is the Seed of Abraham who blessed all nations by dying for their sins (Heb. 2:9; Gen. 3:15; Gal. 3:16, 26-29). God promised through Jacob that a ruler (Christ) would come from Judah (Gen. 49:10). Moses promised that God would raise up a Prophet like himself (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22, 23). God also promised David He would raise up his seed to sit on his throne (II Sam. 7:12-16; Luke 1:32, 33; Acts 2:29-36).

THE KINGDOM WAS PROPHESED IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:

Joel foretold the coming of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:1-21). God would pour out His Spirit (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:16, 17; 2:1-4). It would happen in "the last days" or "afterward" (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:16, 17). Whoever "called upon the name of the Lord would be saved" (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21, 36-41; Acts 22:16). It would take place in Jerusalem (Joel 2:32; Acts 1:4; 2:14). Isaiah foretold the building of the Lord's house (Isa. 2:1-4). It would happen in the "last days" (Isa. 2:2; Acts 2:16, 17). The Lord's house would be built (Isa. 2:2; Acts 2:47; I Tim. 3:15). All nations would come into it (Isa. 2:2; Matthew 28:19; Luke 24:47; Acts 2:5). The word of the Lord would go forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:3; Acts 1:4; 2:14; 8:4, 5). Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the coming of the kingdom (Daniel 2:31-45). Nebuchadnezzar saw a great image (statue) in his dream.

1. Its head was of gold.
2. Its chest and arms were of silver.
3. Its belly and thighs were of brass.
4. Its legs were of iron and its feet of iron and clay.
5. A stone was cut out of a mountain without hands and broke the great image in pieces; then the stone grew into a mighty mountain and filled the earth.

God through Daniel, gave the meaning of the dream: 1. Nebuchadnezzar (Babylon) was the head of gold (612-538 B.C.). 2. Medo-Persia was the chest and arms of silver (538-331 B.C.). 3. Greece (Macedonian Empire) was the belly and thighs of brass (331-63 B.C.). 4. Rome was the legs and feet of iron and clay (63 B.C. to 476 A.D.). In the days of the fourth kingdom (the Roman Empire), God would set up His kingdom and it would never be destroyed (Daniel 2:40-44). The parallel to this prophecy of Daniel is found in (Daniel 7:1-14).

THE KINGDOM WAS IN PREPARATION DURING THE PERSONAL MINISTRIES OF JOHN AND JESUS:

John came as a forerunner to prepare the way for our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ (Mal. 4:5, 6; Matt. 11:13, 14; Luke 1:17). John preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:1, 2). "At hand" means "within reach," or "very near."

Jesus also prepared for the coming of His kingdom. He too preached that the kingdom was at hand (Matt. 4:17). He taught His disciples to pray for the coming of the kingdom (Matt. 6:9, 10). He sent His apostles out to

preach, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 10:7). He promised to build His church and to give Peter the keys of the kingdom (Matt. 16:16-19). Jesus promised, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). He also said to Peter, "I will give you the keys of the kingdom" (Matt. 16:19). Please pay close attention to the fact that "church" and "kingdom" are being used interchangeably. When the church is built the kingdom will come and vice versa. When we see Peter use the keys to open the door of the church, we will know the kingdom has come.

Jesus told His disciples that some of them would live to see the kingdom come with power (Mark 9:1). If the kingdom has not yet come, we must have some apostles among us and they are at least 2,000 years old! Jesus told Nicodemus how to enter the kingdom (John 3:3-5). He told Pilate that His kingdom "is not of this world" (John 18:36). He told His apostles He would drink the fruit of the vine with them in the Father's kingdom (Matt. 26:26-29). The Lord's supper is in the church (I Cor. 11:23-30; Acts 20:7). But the Lord partakes of it with His disciples in His kingdom. Therefore, the church and the kingdom are the same. After His death, burial and resurrection, the Lord told His apostles to wait in Jerusalem for power from on high (Luke 24:49). The kingdom would come with power (Mark 9:1). The power would come with the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-16). Therefore, we can expect to see the kingdom (church) established shortly after the apostles are baptized with the Holy Spirit.

CONCLUSION:

The Lord will never set foot on this earth again to establish a physical kingdom (I Thess. 4:13-18; Zech. 6:12, 13; Heb. 8:1-4). All forms of premillennialism are proven false by the fact that the kingdom has come and the saved are already in it (Col. 1:13).