

BIBLE STUDIES ON THE LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6 vs 9 to 13

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Part 5.

HIS KINGDOM

These words of Jesus obviously make a clear statement regarding the Kingdom that God has. So to pray 'Thy Kingdom come' gives recognition that the Lord is King. A King must have a domain in which there is exercised Kingly Authority and Government. In the world as we know it, there are three forms of government. (a) Monarchist (b) Republican (c) Dictatorship. If a nation is Monarchist it has a King or Queen at the head, a Republic it has a President at the head, and a Dictatorship has an Autocrat as the head. In praying the words of Jesus: 'Thy Kingdom come', we are giving recognition to the person we are praying to - that He is King.

Scriptures in the O.T. and N.T. give ample evidence that the Lord is King and both contain the same revelation of that truth. I believe with so much evidence in both Testaments that we can only conclude that to have a King, necessitates having a Kingdom. Let me list first some of the verses here to highlight the Lord has King in the O.T.

Psalm 10 v 16: "The LORD is King for ever and ever: the heathen are perished out of his land".

Psalm 24 v 7: "7 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in".

Psalm 29 v 10: "10 The LORD sitteth upon the flood; yea, the LORD sitteth King for ever".

Psalm 47 vs 6 & 7: "Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises. For God is the King of all the earth: sing praises with understanding".

Isaiah 6 v 5: "for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts".

Isaiah 44 v 6: "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God".

These are six of the many references there are in the O.T. relating to the Lord as King. There are also many verses which make a clear statement that the Lord Reigns. There are 151 references to the word 'Reign' in the O.T. and 17 in the N.T. some relate to the Lord, others to people and nations.

This gives us a basis on which to build our Bible study, because for us to begin speaking about 'Thy Kingdom come', without the recognition of the Lord as King, would be futile. Therefore having acknowledged the fact that the Lord is King, let us now take a closer look at the instruction of Jesus on how and what we should pray.

I have read that there are more than a hundred references to the Kingdom made in the gospels, so Jesus obviously saw the Kingdom as something that required a consistent mention. The Kingdom occupies more attention in the sayings of Jesus than any other matter. It was something that engaged the attention of both Simeon and Anna Luke 2 v 25 & 38: "And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem". Both of these were looking for the Messianic hope of Israel. In Matthew 2 v 2 we read of the wise men that came from the east. "Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him". The thought of the Kingdom was something that many gave attention to and had some concept of. It was Jesus however who made the teaching about the Kingdom come into real focus, and his references to it in the gospels give rise to the fact that the Kingdom of God is not something which is beyond becoming a reality. It is clear that the Kingdom is at the heart of Jesus' teaching and was central to what He said.

In the gospels there are a number of parables which speak of the Kingdom in various ways. In His parables Jesus spoke of the kingdom in many different ways.

He said that the kingdom is like a farmer (Matt. 13:24)

A seed (Matt. 13:31)

Yeast (Matt. 13:33)

A treasure (Matt. 13:44)

A pearl merchant (Matt. 13:45)

A fishnet (Matt. 13:47)

An employer (Matt. 20:1)

A king inviting people to a marriage feast (Matt. 22:2)

Ten young women (Matt. 25:1).

He spoke also of the glad tidings of the kingdom (Luke 8:1)

Of the mystery of the kingdom of God (Mark 4:11).

Jesus spoke Aramaic; the Gospel writers then translated Jesus' sermons and parables into Greek. I want you to notice that Mark, Luke and John translated Jesus' words as "Kingdom of God." Matthew sometimes used this phrase also, but mostly he translated the words of Jesus from Aramaic and used the words "Kingdom of heaven". The two phrases Kingdom of God & Kingdom of Heaven mean exactly the same thing; they are translations of the same Aramaic words spoken by Jesus.

When Jesus referred to the Kingdom of God, he was meaning the rule of God. Where God reigns He is King. To pray 'Thy Kingdom come' mean we are asking for the rule of God in all departments of our lives, which is what becomes predominant in the petitions of the Lord's Prayer which follow on from this petition.

The Kingdom of God that we are praying will come, is not a Kingdom which has geographical boundaries, it is not a political Kingdom, neither is it a selected company of people. 'Thy Kingdom come' is petitioning the Father and asking that His reign come so that the hearts of all men will come under His rule.

At the present time, the rule of God is restricted to those who have surrendered their lives to Him. 'Thy Kingdom come' is therefore a request and desire to see the rule of God extended to those who have not yet surrendered their lives to the Lord. Even though we pray these words for the kingdom to come, it is true to say that in some respects the Kingdom has come already. When Jesus spoke with Nicodemus He said two very important things to him about the Kingdom. We read in John 3 v 3: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." And verse 5: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God". Notice the word 'See' which means: to know, be aware, behold, consider, perceive, and understand. Then the word 'Enter' which means, come into, go on through. Unless someone is born again they cannot know or go through to the Kingdom of God.

1. THE PRE-EMINANCE OF THE KINGDOM

In His 'Sermon on the Mount' Jesus made reference to the Kingdom when He said: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you". Seeking the Kingdom of God is to be given priority of place in this life. The positive result and outcome of doing what Jesus said, is clearly stated, and must be taken seriously, for if we don't take into account what Jesus said we shall lose out on so much. Jesus states that if we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness we shall lack nothing. The King, whose rule we are under, will provide all that we need. This is a promise

we can hold onto, it is a promise though that is conditional on making the Kingdom of God and His righteousness a priority. There are things some do which are given a greater priority than seeking God. People seek fame, fortune, position, popularity, and each of these can divert and cause one to be distracted from the main goal of life, which should be ‘seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness’.

2. THE PERSONAL EXISTENCE OF THE KINGDOM.

Luke 17 v 21 says: “Behold, the kingdom of God is within you”. Because man is spirit and soul and body (1Thes 5 v 23.), it is obvious that these are areas that can be controlled and influenced by either good or evil. Watchman-Nee says: “The spirit is the God conscious part of man, the soul the self-conscious part, and the body the world conscious part”. I would say that each part of man needs the rule of God to function correctly and be at peace with God, with self, and with the world. In lives that are Kingdom ruled by the influence of God, there is a definite indication that they are at peace. In lives where we see an absence of Kingdom rule there is the presence of unrest and disquiet. The Lord Jesus emancipates people from the reign of sin and death, giving them the privilege of being ruled in all areas of life by God.

Paul writing to the Romans says in chapter 5 v 17: “For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ”. Paul was convinced that it is possible to know the reign of God in every area of our lives. When death reigned we were subject to the law of sin and death, but the law of the Spirit of life in Christ has freed us from that law.

Maybe you could be struggling with some things and are feeling defeated because you don't seem to be able to live a victorious Christian life. By praying this prayer: ‘Thy Kingdom come’ you are actually declaring your intent to let God rule in all departments of your life. If the Lord is allowed to rule, you don't need to fight for victory. When the rule of God becomes a reality, and not just a theory, the enemy has no alternative but to leave the area and the words of Paul then come into focus Romans 8 v 37: “In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us”.

Further in Colossians 1 v 13 Paul writes: “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves”. This verse gives us the evidence we need to show that we are no longer in the domain where the devil is reigning. By

submitting ourselves have actually made available spirit, soul, and body so that the Lord can reign in our mortal bodies.

By praying 'Thy Kingdom come' we are requesting that the same reign of God that we know in our lives will be extended to other lives.

3. THE ESCATLOGICAL KINGDOM

Although we have looked at the Kingdom, which is in existence now through the reign of Christ, we have to realise that there is still a further manifestation of the Kingdom rule of God, which is to take place. In Acts 1 v 6 a question was directed to Jesus: "They asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus told them it was not for them to know the time or the seasons the Father had put in His own power.

The subject of the actual establishing of the Literal Kingdom of God and the enthronement of Christ as King and His reign, is a matter that requires a lot of time spent on it, and should be a study all of its own. I make reference to it to highlight to you another facet of the Lord's prayer, because when we pray 'Thy Kingdom come' we can also be referring to the Kingdom of God that will be established in the not too far distant future.

Finally, there are two further references to the Kingdom I will mention here. One relating to the authority we have, known as 'Kingdom authority' and the other relates to the Kingdom as a possession.

Matt 16 v 19: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven".

Luke 12 v 32: "32 Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom".

“Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name, they Kingdom come”.