

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Monday, February 21

Reading: Psalm 145

Psalm 145:13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures through all generations

“Your kingdom come, Your will be done” is the heart of the Lord’s Prayer. Before the start of Jesus’ ministry, all eyes were on John the Baptist preaching a baptism of repentance in the Jordan River. And what was the major theme of his message: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven¹ has come near” (Matthew 3:2). When Jesus begins His ministry, He proclaims the same message (Matthew 4:17) and expanded on it! He gave His “Kingdom Manifesto” that we call the Sermon on the Mount, at the center of which lies the Lord’s Prayer. His miracles displayed the power of the kingdom and His parables described the Kingdom in picturesque ways. This was NOT a new message for to the people of Israel.

Psalm 103:19 proclaims: “The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all.” Psalm 145 praises “God my King” for His greatness, splendor, and power (3-7) and His grace, compassion, and goodness (8-10).

Psalm 145:11-13 They tell of the glory of Your kingdom and speak of Your might, so that all people may know of Your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of Your kingdom. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures through all generations

Not to mention the numerous times the psalms and prophets proclaim that “The Lord reigns” and “The Lord is King.” The Old Testament saints longed for the kingdom of God.

By Jesus’ time, the kingdom of God had become a political and national hope. It was the desire for Messiah to come and restore the glory of Israel by destroying their enemies and setting up His chosen people as the rulers of the earth. Even Jesus’ own 12 apostles held to this view of the kingdom. When Jesus said “the kingdom was near”, they became excited with anticipation of glory. They didn’t realize that first the King had to go to the cross. That is why they were so disappointed after Jesus’ death. To them, the kingdom had failed!

Today, we often have the same misconception. We identify God’s kingdom solely with the future reign of Christ when “the kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Messiah, and He will reign for ever and ever” (Revelation 11:15). But Jesus proclaimed the kingdom was near and would later say that it was “in your midst” (Luke 17:21). The presence of Jesus brought God’s kingdom to earth. The kingdom of God is both now and not yet. One day, Jesus will return and set all things right. But He is still the sovereign King even now.

Re-read Psalm 145. What words and phrases do you see that show us the character of God? How do these help us to understand what God’s kingdom is all about?

¹ Some make a distinction between the “kingdom of heaven” and the “kingdom of God” but they should probably be seen as synonyms. While he does use both terms in his gospel, Matthew is the only one of the four gospels to use “kingdom of heaven.” Writing to a Jewish audience, he is likely merely substituting “heaven” for the name of God in these cases.