

The Kingdom Teachings

by Lewis Sperry Chafer

The sermon explores the kingdom teachings in the Bible, highlighting the differences between the age of the law of Moses, the age of grace, and the age of the kingdom.

Scripture: Isaiah 11:1

Topics: "Kingdom Teachings", "Dispensationalism"

Description

Lewis Sperry Chafer preaches about the division of time into seven periods, or dispensations, focusing on the last three ages: the age of the law of Moses, the age of grace, and the age of the kingdom. He emphasizes the importance of understanding the distinct characteristics and divine rule of each age, cautioning against the common error of confusing them. Chafer explains the significance of the kingdom teachings in the Old Testament and Gospels, highlighting the legal requirements and intensified standards of righteousness in the kingdom age, distinct from the grace teachings of the present age.

Transcript

According to the Scriptures, all time is divided into seven periods, or dispensations.

The Bible is occupied, in the main, with the last three of these periods. All that lies between Exodus, chapter 19, and Revelation, chapter 20, is the unfolding of the exact scope and character of these three ages.

These ages are:

The age of the law of Moses, which is measured by the duration of the reign of that law, or from Sinai to Calvary;

The age of the kingdom, which is measured by the earth-reign of the King, or from the second coming of Christ when He comes to occupy His throne (Matt. 25:31), to the bringing in of the eternal state in the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:1; 1 Cor. 15:24-28);

And lying between the age of the law of Moses, which is wholly past, and the age of the kingdom, which is wholly future, there is the present age of grace, bounded by the death of Christ, on the one hand, and by His Second Advent, on the other.

The revelation concerning the outstanding ordinance for this age also marks the limit of duration of the age itself with a future event dateless, but nevertheless sure:

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

Due recognition of the essential character of each of these ages is the key to the understanding of the exact manner of the divine rule in each age. The rule of God in each case is adapted to the conditions which obtain. Since the respective characteristics of the ages are widely different, the manner of the divine rule is correspondingly different.

The practice of confusing these three ages in respect to their characteristics and the manner of the divine rule in each is common, and is, doubtless, the greatest error into which many devout Bible interpreters fall.

It is perhaps easier to confuse the present age with that which immediately precedes it, or with that which immediately follows it, than to confuse it with conditions which are more remote; although there need be no confusion of these immediately succeeding but sharply separated periods of time, for they are divided by age-transforming events.

The age of the law of Moses is separated from the present age of grace by the death of Christ, when He bore the curse of the law and finished the work by which one may stand justified before God forever, and justified as he could not have been justified by the law of Moses. The age of grace is separated from the age of the kingdom by the second coming of Christ to the earth--the time when He comes to reign, to bind Satan, to terminate human governments, and to cause righteousness and peace to cover the earth as the waters cover the face of the deep.

The divine government could not remain the same in the earth after the world-transforming, spiritual victories of the Cross, as it had been under the law of Moses. So, likewise, the divine government cannot remain the same in the earth after the world-transforming temporal victories of the Second Coming, as it has been under the reign of grace. All this is reasonable; but, what is far more impelling and compelling, this is what is precisely revealed by God in His Word.

There are, then, three separate and distinct systems of divine government disclosed in the Scriptures, corresponding to three separate and distinct ages to be governed.

In respect to the character of divine government, both the age before the Cross and the age following the return of Christ represent the exercise of pure law, while the period between these two ages represents the exercise of pure grace. It is imperative, therefore, that there shall be no careless co-mingling of these great age-characterizing elements, else the preservation of the most important distinctions in the various relationships between God and people are lost, and the recognition of the true force of the death of Christ and His coming again is obscured.

Kingdom teachings will be found in those psalms and prophecies of the Old Testament which anticipate the reign of Messiah in the earth, and in the kingdom portions of the Gospels. These teachings as found in the Old Testament and the New are purely legal in essence, both by their inherent character, and by the explicit declaration of the Word of God.

The legal requirements of the kingdom teachings are greatly advanced, both in severity and detail, beyond the requirements of the law of Moses. This intensification of legal requirements, as it appears in the kingdom teachings, should not be looked upon as a mere continuation of the law of Moses. The kingdom

teaching is a system complete and perfect in itself. Moreover, this intensification of legal requirements in kingdom revelations does not move the teachings of the Mosaic law nearer the heart of the teachings of grace. On the contrary, it removes them still farther in the opposite direction, inasmuch as the teachings of the kingdom increase the burden of meritorious workers over that which was required by the law of Moses.

In the kingdom law, anger is condemned in the same connection where only murder had been prohibited in the law of Moses, and the glance of the eye is condemned where only adultery had previously been forbidden.

The kingdom Scriptures of the Old Testament are occupied largely with the character and glory of Messiah's reign, the promises to Israel of restoration and earthly glory, the universal blessings to Gentiles, and the deliverance of creation itself. There is little revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures concerning the responsibility of the individual in the kingdom; it is rather a message to the nation as a whole.

Evidently the details concerning individual responsibility, were, in the mind of the Spirit, reserved for the personal teaching of the King, at the time when the kingdom would be "at hand."

As to the reign of the King, two important disclosures are made in the kingdom portions of the Old Testament:

(1) His will be a rigid reign of righteousness that shall go forth from Jerusalem with swift judgment upon the sinner (Isa. 2:1-4; 11:1-5); and

(2), according to the new covenant which He will have made with His people, He will have put His laws into their minds, and will have written them on their hearts (Jer. 31:31-40; Heb. 8:7-12).

The writing of the law upon the heart is a divine assistance toward the keeping of the kingdom law which was in no wise provided under the reign of the law of Moses. However, the written law on the heart, as it will be in the kingdom, is not to be compared with the power of the indwelling Spirit which is the present divine enablement provided for the believer under grace.

Under the new covenant, God will have put away the former sin of the nation forever. This, it is revealed, He is free to do through the blood of His Son who, as God's Lamb, took away the sin of the world (Matt. 13:44; Rom. 11:26-27).

The great key words under the Mosaic system were "law" and "obedience";

the great key words in the present age are "believe" and "grace", while

the great key words in the kingdom are "righteousness" and "peace".

The following are brief excerpts from the Old Testament Scriptures bearing on the kingdom:

The word that Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation,

neither shall they learn war any more (Isa. 2:1-4).

And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins (Isa. 11:1-5).

And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. And I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them: and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be lacking, saith the Lord. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness.... And they shall dwell in their own land (Jer. 23:3-8).

"For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days" (Hosea 3:4-5).

Turning to the New Testament Scriptures bearing on the kingdom, it is important first to consider again the twofold character of the work and teachings of Christ. He was both a minister to Israel to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and a minister to the Gentiles that they might glorify God for His mercy (Rom. 15:8-9).

These two widely different revelations are not separated in the Scriptures by a well-defined boundary of chapter and verse; they are intermingled in the text and are to be identified wherever found by the character of the message and the circumstances under which it is given. This, it should be remembered, is the usual divine method of presenting truth.

To illustrate: there is no chapter and verse boundary in the prophetic books of the Old Testament between that portion of the Scriptures which presented the immediate duty of Israel, and that portion of the Scriptures which presented their future obligation in Messiah's kingdom. The prophets, while unfolding both of these widely differing obligations, commingle these messages in the text and the different messages are discerned only through an observance of the character of the truth revealed.

Likewise, there is, to some extent, a commingling in the Gospels of the message of the kingdom and the teachings of grace. Moreover, these teachings were given while the law of Moses was in full authority.

In harmony with the demands of that dispensation, many recognitions of the Mosaic system are embedded in the teachings of Christ.

The Gospels are complex almost beyond any other portion of Scripture, since they are a composite of the teachings of Moses, of grace, and of the kingdom. In attempting to discover and to identify the kingdom

teachings of Christ as they are commingled with the teachings of grace, and of the law, it is of value to note the peculiar feature of each gospel:

The gospel by Matthew is a message to Israel of her King and His kingdom.

In that gospel He is introduced first as the "Son of David" (Mat. 1:1), which title immediately relates Him to the Davidic covenant, and that covenant eternally secures for Israel a throne, a King, and a kingdom. Christ, being the Son of David, is the Messiah-King--the Hope and Consolation of Israel. While this gospel is primarily of the King and His kingdom, the closing portion is of Christ as the Son of Abraham.

The gospel by Mark presents Christ as the Servant of Jehovah.

It records more concerning His service than of His teaching, and, like Matthew's gospel, it is almost wholly addressed to Israel.

The gospel by Luke presents Christ in His humanity, and, while written to Jews, the avowed purpose of the writer is to "set in order" and establish the "certainty of those things which are most surely believed among us." This certainty of testimony is thus sealed: "Having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first" ("from above." Cf. John 3:31; 19:11; James 1:17; 3:15, 17).

The gospel by John was also written for a particular purpose:

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31).

Thus the saving grace of God in Christ is declared to be the theme of this gospel. While the ministry of Christ to Israel is acknowledged by the words, "He came to his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11), the gospel by John is primarily of the grace of God in salvation through Christ.

The gospel by John divides the teachings of Christ into two parts:

chapters 1-12, the grace of God that saves; and

chapters 13-16, and 19-21, the grace of God that teaches.

From this brief consideration of the Gospels it may be concluded that those teachings of Christ which confirm the covenants made to the fathers, or Israel, will be found primarily in the Synoptic Gospels, and that these kingdom teachings are crystallized in the first portion of the first gospel.

The position of this kingdom portion in the context of the Scriptures is also significant--following immediately, as it does, on the Old Testament.

The Old Testament closed with its great hopes unrealized and its great prophecies unfulfilled. These hopes were based on covenants from Jehovah to which He had sworn with an oath. These covenants guarantee to the nation an earthly kingdom in their own land, under the abiding reign of Messiah, sitting on the throne of His father David. No such promise was fulfilled in the Old Testament period. The kingdom as provided for in the faithfulness of Jehovah has been revealed in the Old Testament only in predictive prophecy. No such kingdom situation existed when Christ was born. It is expressly declared that Israel's great hope and consolation was yet in expectation when Christ came (Luke 1:31-33; 2:25). The children of Israel were then largely scattered among the nations and their land was under the authority of Rome.

At this point and under these circumstances, a new message went forth: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand."

It was proclaimed by the forerunner--John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1-2), by Christ (Matt. 4:17), and by His disciples (Matt. 10:5-7).

The strongest prohibition was imposed against the giving of this message to any Gentile, or even to a Samaritan (Matt. 10:5-6. Cf. Matt. 15:24). The message, though brief, was calculated to arouse all the national longings of the people to whom it was spoken. The messengers needed no analytical training to sense the exact meaning of their theme. As instructed Israelites, the kingdom hope had been their expectation and meditation from birth.

on, and in contrast to this, their utter slowness of heart to understand the new facts and teachings of grace is most obvious. Even when after His resurrection Christ had given forty days of instruction in things pertaining to the kingdom of God, they said: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6), so little had they grasped the meaning of His death and the immediate purpose of grace.

On the other hand, there is no record that the messengers needed or received one moment of exposition as to the meaning of the message relative to the gospel of the kingdom before they were sent forth to deliver it. It was evidently Israel's hope.

The phrase, "the kingdom of heaven", is peculiar to the gospel by Matthew, and refers to the rule of God in the earth. In that particular, it is to be distinguished from the kingdom of God, which is the rule of God throughout the bounds of the universe. One, in certain aspects, is included in the other, and there is, therefore, much that is common to both.

The Messianic rule of God in the earth was the theme of the prophets, for the prophets only enlarged on the covenants which guaranteed a throne, a King, and a kingdom, over regathered Israel, in that land which was sworn to Abraham. The term, the "kingdom of heaven," was used by Christ to announce the fact that the covenanted kingdom blessings were "at hand."

This good news to that nation was the "gospel of the kingdom," and should in no wise be confused with the gospel of saving grace.

The national hope was centered in the genuineness of the claims of both the King and His forerunner. The evidence was carefully weighed, it may be believed, and it was found unimpeachable; but the wickedness of heart prevailed. They imprisoned the forerunner, who was later beheaded by Herod, and they crucified the King. Both the forerunner and the King fulfilled prophecy in respect to the office of each in every detail. The forerunner was the voice of one crying in the wilderness. The King was of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, a son of David born of a virgin, in Bethlehem of Judea. He came out of Egypt, and was called a Nazarene.

At His birth He was proclaimed, "King of the Jews."

In His public ministry He took up the message of a king.

At His entrance into Jerusalem He was hailed as Israel's king.

At His trial before Pilate, He claimed to be a king. And

He died under the accusation, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

The crown of thorns had no significance in relation to His sacrificial death for sin: it was the emblem of the nation's derision for His kingship claim. They thus fulfilled by act the very prophecy the King had made: "We will not have this man to rule over us."

There should be no confusion at this point. The rulers of the nation who demanded His death were not personally rejecting a Savior, as sinners are rejecting Him now; they were rejecting their King. They did not say, "We will not believe on the Savior to the salvation of our souls"; they said, "We have no king but Caesar."

The rejection of the King was according to "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23); for His rejection and humiliation were foreshadowed in the types, and foreseen in the prophecies of the Old Testament; He was the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

At every step in the record His rejection and death are said to be the fulfilling of the Scriptures. It is recorded of Him in sixteen passages that He, by His rejection and death, fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures. It is also recorded of Him in nine passages that He was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning the King.

The first ministry of Christ was, then, to Israel as her King.

In this He appeared,

not as a personal Savior, but as her long expected Messiah;

not as a Lamb, but as a Lion;

not as a sacrifice by which a church--the spotless bride--might be purchased to Himself from

among all nations, but as the Son of David, with every right to David's throne over Israel, at Jerusalem, in the Land of Promise.

In the Synoptic Gospels, there is, therefore, no record of any step toward the formation of the church, or any reference to that great purpose, until, from His own nation, His rejection as King is evident.

According to the Synoptic Gospels, the early teachings of the King were of that nation, and were in no wise related to the great results which would afterwards be accomplished through His death and resurrection in the calling out of His church from all the nations of the earth. Upon His rejection, He began to speak in anticipation of His death of the formation of His church, and of His coming back again to the earth. He likewise related the sure fulfillment of every covenant with Israel to the time of His return.

Was, then, the gospel of the kingdom, as announced by John, by Christ, and by His disciples, a bonafide message?

Did it really mean what it announced?

Was Israel's long predicted kingdom at hand?

If so, and had they received their King, what would have become of the divine purposes of redemption as they were to be accomplished through His death?

These questions are insistently asked today; but the answers are not difficult.

The gospel of the kingdom was a bonafide message to Israel.

To treat it otherwise is to accuse God of trickery and deception. It is likewise a serious misrepresentation of all the related Scriptures to apply the message and teaching of the King to the present purposes of God in this age of grace. All confusion which arises concerning the kingdom message in its relation to the Cross arises from the failure to recognize the important distinction between the divine viewpoint and the human viewpoint.

It is only another application of the rationalistic trick of playing the free will of human beings against the sovereignty of God.

On the human side, there was a clear-cut issue with unrestrained power to choose or reject the King.

On the divine side, there was a genuine offer of the kingdom in the Person, presence, and ministry of the King;

but back of this was the foreknowledge of God which was absolute as to the choice they would make.

Their choice would be but the outworking of the eternal purpose of God in Christ, and for that choice they would be held guilty.

On the divine side, it is said: "Therefore they could not believe" (John 12:39), and on the human side, it is said: "They hated me without a cause" (John 15:25).

Is this the only example of such a problem in the Scriptures? By no means.

Every dispensation represents a new divine purpose in the testing of humanity. In every case humanity is seen to fail, and to be guilty before God; yet we behold God patiently and faithfully bringing people face-to-face with the issues involved.

After a brief experience in the wilderness, He took Israel to Kadesh Barnea where He provided and offered an immediate entrance into their own land. The choice was theirs; they refused to enter. They were guilty. God knew they would refuse to enter the land, yet His offer was genuine, and His purposes were realized. In chastisement, God sent them back into the wilderness for forty years of added discomfort. In His owntime, and by His own power, they finally entered the land. This portion of Israel's history may be taken to be typical.

When Christ came, the nation had then experienced over five hundred years of trial in dispossession of their land and the vacancy of David's throne. When their Messiah came, they refused the divine provisions centered in the King, and, as typified at Kadesh, they returned to what has now proven to be two thousand years of added affliction. The day is coming, however, when, according to the faithfulness of God, they will receive their King and abide under His undimmed glory.

Turning to the Old Testament, the student is confronted with the problem of the right adjustment as to the time of fulfillment of two great lines of prophecy concerning Christ.

On the one hand, He was prophesied to come as a monarch whose reign and kingdom would be everlasting (Cf. 2 Sam. 7:16; Ps. 72:1-20; 89:35-37; Isa 9:6-7). The thought of His death is foreign to this body of prophecy. It is no function of a king to die--"Long live the king!" But, on the other hand, there is prophecy equally as explicit regarding the sacrificial, substitutionary death of Christ (Ps. 22:1-21; Isa. 53:1-12).

Manifestly, these two lines of undertaking could not be accomplished simultaneously.

Christ could not be the resistless, undying King, and be an unresisting sacrifice, at one and the same time.

It was this very time element in the problem which Peter declared was not disclosed to the prophets. He writes: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. 1:10-11).

Since the present age of grace and its purpose was not revealed to the writers of the Old Testament, the time element relating these two lines of prophecy could not be disclosed. When the fullness of time came, it pleased God to present His King in fulfillment of prophecy and according to all His covenants to Israel. Both by the "determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" and by the free choice of the nation, the King was rejected and crucified. It is evident, therefore, that the prophecies concerning the King and His earthly kingdom remain unfulfilled to this hour. They are not forgotten or abandoned. Neither are they receiving a spiritual fulfillment. They are yet to be fulfilled when the King returns to the earth.

In like manner, the same clear light as to the divine purpose is revealed through Daniel when he predicts the order of events to be fulfilled in the period between his own time and that of the reign of Messiah. In this prophecy the "cutting off of Messiah" precedes the reign of the King. Thus did God anticipate what would take place; but this in no wise lessens the exercise of free choice on the part of the nation Israel in rejecting the King.

It is puerile to assert that the cross of Christ was held in jeopardy until Israel's choice concerning the King had been consummated. Let those who traffic in such tricks of argument be consistent to the point of applying their rationalism to all the great issues wherein the sovereignty of God and the free will of humanity are found to meet.

The ministry of Christ was genuine. He was a minister to the circumcision to confirm the promises made to the fathers. He was likewise the open door into the grace of God that Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy. Though real, His rejection as King was the necessary step in all redemption, and God in faithfulness will yet fulfill every covenant related to the throne, the King, the nation, and the land. This He will do when the King comes back to the earth again.

It has been necessary to outline the relation of the covenanted, earthly kingdom to the First Advent of Christ, in order that the kingdom teachings of Christ may be seen in their true setting.

Referring to the first section of the gospel by Matthew (chapters 1-12), wherein the gospel of the kingdom is preached to Israel, it will be found that this precise message of the kingdom gospel was first announced by John the Baptist, of whom it is said: "For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight" (Matt.

3:1-3), it was announced by the King Himself (Matt. 4:17), and by the disciples (Matt. 10:5-7).

Embedded in this context wherein only the gospel of the kingdom is in view, and completely bounded by the records of these proclamations, is the Sermon on the Mount, which is evidently the manifesto of the King (Matt. 5:1-7:29).

In this manifesto the King declares

the essential character of the kingdom,

the conduct which will be required in

the kingdom, and the conditions of entrance into the kingdom.

This kingdom rule of life is purely legal, both in its inherent qualities and by its own claim (Matt. 7:12). It is, however, very different from the law as given by Moses. In the kingdom teachings, as has been stated, the commands of Moses are advanced into requirements vastly more impossible as to detail, and this does not relieve, but rather intensifies, its character as strictly legal. Christ does not disown the principles of the law in the unfoldings of kingdom requirements any more than He does in all His dealings with Israel before His death. He is rather presenting a new degree and standard of law which is adapted to the conditions which shall obtain in the kingdom, and which He contrasts with the law of Moses.

The great kingdom words--righteousness and peace--are dominant, and there is never a reference either to salvation, or grace. Nor is there the slightest reference to those great realities of relationship which belong to the new creation wrought by Christ through His death and resurrection. Such a complete omission of any reference to any feature of the present age of grace, is a fact which should be carefully weighed.

The minute accuracy of the Scripture is seen in Christ's use of the phrase my commandments. During the days of His ministry to the nation Israel, He enforced the commandments of Moses, and spoke of the new principles which were to be applied in the kingdom as "these sayings of mine," and "I say unto you"; but at no time did He use the term my commandments until He used it with His disciples in the Upper Room, and at the time when He was unfolding the new principles which were to condition the daily living of those who should stand on resurrection ground, in the new creation, and under grace.

It is also significant that the first use of the term commandment in this grace message is when He said, "A new commandment I give unto you" (John 13:34). There is, therefore, a possible limitation to be placed on the extent of the responsibility imposed by Christ in His great commission wherein he said: "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). It is hardly probable that He intends all the Mosaic law, the governing principles of the kingdom, and the teachings of grace, to be combined and applied to those who receive the message of the great commission.

In the teachings of the kingdom, the characterizing phrase is, "hear and do" (Matt. 7:24), while the characterizing phrase under grace is "hear and believe" (John 5:24).

The essential character of the teachings of the kingdom as they are contrasted with the teachings of Moses, and as they are contrasted with the teachings of grace, will, at another point of the discussion, be considered at length.

There is a sense in which the kingdom of God, as the rule of God in the hearts of individuals, is present in the world today. This should not be confused with the Messianic kingdom which is to be set up over a nation, and extended through them to all nations, with the King ruling, not in the individual heart, but on the throne of David, in the city of Jerusalem.

As the King came nearer to His death, and the rejection became more evident, He made mention of that aspect of the rule of God in the individual heart which was to characterize the hitherto unannounced age of grace.

The following passage (like Matt. 13:1-52), taken from the later teachings of Christ as recorded by Luke, is an example: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation [outward show]: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you [in your midst]" (Luke 17:20-21).

In no sense could it be truthfully said that the kingdom of God was in the hearts of those Christ-rejecting Pharisees. There was, however, a real sense in which the kingdom of God was to be, as it is now, in the hearts of individual believers; but the direct statement of Christ is to the effect that the kingdom was then, in the Person of the King, in their midst. So, also, the phrase, "the kingdom of God cometh not with outward show," anticipates the present aspect of the rule of God in the individual heart; but after this, and according to all prophecy, the kingdom of heaven will come with outward show. There is much promise of a transformed earth, which condition will be ushered in, not by unseen forces and processes, but through the resistless power and presence of the returning King.

So, also, He could say to Israel: "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke 10:9). As certainly as the King was before the nation, so certainly their kingdom was before them, and this was the appeal of the gospel of the kingdom which was given to "the children of the kingdom" only.

When the King was rejected, His kingdom was rejected. When His kingdom was rejected and its realization delayed until the return of the King, the application of all Scripture which conditions life in the kingdom was delayed, as well, and will be delayed as long as the King tarries. This necessary delay is easily accepted with reference to the earthly, national glory, which is the theme of the kingdom teachings of the Old Testament; but it is equally true that there is a necessary delay in application of the last detail of human obligation related to the earthly kingdom as set forth in the New Testament.

The kingdom teachings are a sufficient and complete statement of all that it will be necessary for one to know concerning the terms of entrance into, and conduct in the Messianic kingdom on the earth. Much in these kingdom teachings is similar to that which is found in the teachings of Moses. Much is similar, also, to the teachings of grace; but these facts do not constitute these teachings an indivisible whole, nor do they justify a careless commingling of these great systems of rule in the earth.

The characterizing elements in each will be found to be those principles which are peculiarly applicable to the dispensation to which they belong, rather than in the principles wherein they are similar.

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