

Dear Reader:

This lesson was delivered Jan. 4, 1959 on the T.V. program, WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH? (KTVH, Wichita-Hutchinson, Kansas) with the hope that it would prove beneficial to those who viewed and heard.

And now to you who will read, with but few exceptions, this lesson deals with the prophetic Word of God, to show that it was in the mind of God to set up a spiritual Kingdom, to which all nations of the earth may be added.

Our hopes are that you will carefully investigate the contents of the lesson, and that you may have a clearer conception of God's spiritual Kingdom.

Any questions you have regarding this lesson will be kindly dealt with.

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN PROPHECY

INTRODUCTION

1. Friends, this lesson is designed for you; it is written in the hope of enriching your understanding of God's Kingdom, for my topic is THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN PROPHECY.

2. My lesson is made much easier as a result of the very splendid lesson delivered a few weeks ago by Philip Slate, of the Emporia Ave. church of Christ; his lesson demonstrated the Bible to be the sole authority in religion. Having established the Bible as the proper religious authority, therefore, the remarks in this lesson should prove helpful to those of you who desire a better understanding of the Kingdom of God in Prophecy.

3. Before going into the lesson proper, it is necessary to define the terms to be used: "Kingdom of God" and "in Prophecy."

a. By "Kingdom of God" is meant, "a spiritual institution, composed of men and women of every nation under heaven."

b. "In prophecy" simply means that "in ages past God declared through His Word, in prophetic utterances, that His Kingdom would exist."

4. My approach to this subject is this: I will go into these prophetic utterances in detail in order to set the facts clearly before you. I hope you find them profitable.

DISCUSSION

1. The scope of my lesson may be expressed in the three following things I plan to do:

a. To show it to have been in the mind of God in ages past to set up a spiritual kingdom.

b. To point out some of the passages in God's Word relative to that glorious Kingdom.

f. In 32 A.D. Jesus said, "And I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church (or "kingdom," as they are used synonymously in this setting, (R) and the gates of hell will not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18)

Note: These few passages of prophetic scripture have been given with only one purpose in mind, and that is to show that it was in the mind of God in ages past to set up His Kingdom. Having established this, therefore, it is now necessary to go into these passages and point out characteristics of the Kingdom mentioned in Prophecy.

Following are some charts. They point out in chronological order some of the high points in the passages already quoted

Chart I

Isa. 2:2-4 (600 B. C.)

In the last days (Heb. 1:1-2)
Lord's house established (1 Tim. 3:15)
Exalted above the hills (Isa. 2:2-3)
All nations flow unto it (Gal. 3:26-9)
Teach us of his ways (Jno. 6:44-5)
Word of Lord from Jerusalem (Lk. 24:46-7)

Chart II

Dan. 2:44-5 (606 B. C.)

In the days of these kings
God of Heaven shall set up kingdom
Never be destroyed
Not left to other people
Break in pieces these kingdoms
Stand forever

At this point in our study, it seems profitable to engage in a little more detailed study of the incidents mentioned in Dan. 2:44ff.

Nebuchadnezzar had this terrible dream, and neither he nor any of his wise men (astrologers or magicians) were able to interpret it. Daniel, a Jewish captive, was called to interpret the dream for the king. Daniel told him of Babylon being the "head of gold" on the image, and that three other kingdoms were to follow his.

The second kingdom which arose was the Medo-Persian kingdom.

A very interesting incident took place during the defeat of the first kingdom by the second under Cyrus.

"Cyrus on his way to Babylon came to the banks of the Gyndes a stream which . . . empties itself into the River Tigris.

"When Cyrus reached this stream, which could not be passed in boats, one of the sacred white horses accompanying the march . . . marched into the water, and tried to cross by himself; but the current seized him, swept him along with it, and drowned him in its depths. Cyrus, enraged at the insolence of the river, threatened to break its strength, that in the future even women should cross it, easily, without wetting their knees. Accordingly he put off for a time his attack on Babylon, and dividing his army into two parts, he marked out by ropes 180 trenches on each side of the Gyndes, leading off from it in all directions, and setting his army to dig, some on one side of the river, some on the other. He accomplished his threat by the aid of so great a number of hands. . . .

Having accomplished this, "Cyrus with the first approach of the ensuing Spring, marched against Babylon. The Babylonians encamped without the walls, awaiting his coming. A battle was fought at a short distance from the city, in which the Babylonians were defeated by the Persian King, whereupon they shut themselves up and made light of his siege, having laid in store provisions for many years in preparation against this attack. . . .

"Cyrus was now reduced to great perplexity . . . In this distress either someone made the suggestion to him, or he thought of a plan himself, which he proceeded to put into execution. He placed a portion of his army at the point where the river Euphrates enters the city . . . with orders to march into Babylon by the bed of the stream, as soon as the water became shallow enough: . . . he turned the Euphrates by a canal into the basin, which was then a marsh, on which the river sank to such an extent that the natural bed became fordable. Hereupon the Persians who had been left for the purpose at Babylon by the river side, entered the stream, which had now sunk so as to reach about mid-way up a man's thigh, and thus they entered into Babylon and defeated it."¹

After the fall of Babylon, the Medo-Persian kingdom lasted for a number of years; but another great warrior arose and defeated the Persians. This man was Alexander the Great. His kingdom was another world empire. Alexander's kingdom was followed by another, the fourth great world empire. It was in the days of the fourth world kingdom that Daniel said God's everlasting Kingdom would be established.

1. Herodotus, Persian Wars. pp. 102-103.

Chart #III

Dan. 7:13-14 (555 B. C.)

Saw in the night visions
One like the Son of man
Came with the clouds of heaven
Came to Ancient of days
Given dominion, glory, and a kingdom
All nations should serve him
Everlasting dominion
Kingdom shall not pass away

Chart #IV

(30 A. D.)

Kingdom of God at hand	(Matt. 4:17)	Jesus
" " " " "	(Matt. 3:1-2)	John
" " " " "	(Matt. 10:7)	the twelve
" " " " come		
nigh	(Mk. 10:9)	the seventy

Note: This demonstrates that the Kingdom had not been established as yet, but that the time was drawing near for it to "come."

Chart #V

(31 A. D.)

Disciples taught to pray for its coming (Matt. 6:9-10)

Chart #VI

(32 A. D.)

Kingdom would come
Before some tasted death (Mk. 9:1)
Would come with power

Chart #VII

(32 A. D.)

Will build my church (kingdom
Gates of hades not to prevail against it (Matt. 16:18)
Give keys to enter

CONCLUSION

In closing, it seems good to mention in chart form the main characteristics of the Kingdom of God as it has been described in prophecy.

prophecy

Chart #VIII

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S KINGDOM:

1. Last days
2. All nations
3. Jerusalem
4. Come with power
5. Eternal in nature

One observation is in place: for men to find God's Kingdom today, it will be necessary for that Kingdom to have the proceeding identifying characteristics.

It is hoped these comments have been profitable to you. The purpose of this lesson has been to point out the characteristics of God's Kingdom as revealed in prophecy. A detailed lesson on the fulfillment of these prophetic statements will be discussed by Wilburn C. Hill in a subsequent lesson.

--W. R. Murray