

# 1.

## “THY KINGDOM COME”

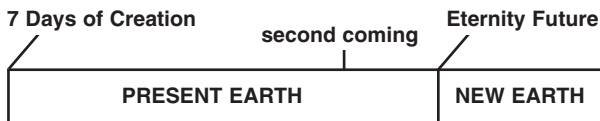
When Jesus Christ returns in His glory, this is not the end of the story for the present earth. Our Lord’s plan is not to return momentarily, whisk believers off to heaven and abandon the earth to a later destruction by fire (II Pet 3:10). As a matter of fact, God has plans for this earth. After His return, He intends to set up a kingdom here. Centered in Jerusalem in the land of Israel, His authority will be established over all the inhabited earth. This kingdom will last for one thousand years and so is therefore known as the “Millennial Kingdom.”

The people over whom He will reign are those few who have survived the tribulation period. Although initially their numbers will be very reduced from today’s population because of the tribulation judgments, since there will be no wars and undoubtedly a lack of plagues and diseases during the millennium, the numbers of human beings on the earth will grow rapidly. We are not speaking here about the church or believers, but about “normal” people who by God’s mercy survived His judgments on the earth.

Not only will Jesus be reigning on this earth for 1,000 years, but Christians too will be involved in this Kingdom. Those who have made themselves ready will reign with Him (Rev 20:4). Many believers have their hearts and minds set on heaven but God is not finished with this earth yet. While it is good to “set our mind on things which are above” (Col 3:2), we also should be aware of and looking forward to what God is planning. We should understand what really is going to happen. After His return, His plan

is to spend one thousand more years on this earth. It is only after this millennial kingdom that there will be “a new heaven and a new earth” (Rev 21:1) which is what many think of as “heaven.”

A brief time chart is being included here to aid the reader in understanding these events in their proper sequence.



In light of the above facts, perhaps we as Christians should reconsider our present suppositions concerning the earth and what our role in it should be. Perhaps we should relinquish our escapist philosophy and realize that God is not finished with the earth yet and neither are we. I am not talking here about a new plan to improve the environment or to end nuclear war. Neither am I going to recommend some social action to improve the present state of affairs. What I am proposing is that believers need to be getting ready for the next phase of God’s plan on this present earth – the coming Kingdom.

Now I realize that there are those who do not believe that there is an earthly Kingdom coming, or think that it is here today or even that it has come and gone already. But dealing with these doubts, misconceptions and misunderstandings in any kind of a thorough way is really beyond the scope of this book. Suffice it to say that if people do not see from the scriptures a Millennial (1,000 year) Kingdom where Satan is bound (Rev 20:3,7) – which surely he is not today – where Jesus Christ is ruling the nations with a rod of iron and they are infinitely obedient to His will (Rev 19:15), where the sucking child will play on the hole of the asp and the wolf will lie down with the lamb (Is 11:6-8), where men beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks and there is no more war (Is 2:4), where Christ reigns physically on the earth (I Cor 15:25, Is 24:23, Rev 20:6), reappoints the land of Israel

among the twelve tribes (Ezek 48) and builds again the temple (Ezek 40-43, Zech 6:12,13); if they do not see in this an earthly, physical Kingdom of Jesus Christ, then I do not know how to convince them. There is just no way to prove anything to anybody from the scriptures if they are not open to it. However if there are those who are not certain about this and are genuinely interested in a better understanding of the coming Kingdom of God, then I suggest they go to a good Christian bookstore and buy some books written by authors who believe the Bible literally, just as it reads, and do some further study. Also a partial listing of scriptures concerning the Kingdom is being included at the end of this book for the serious Bible student. "And we shall reign on the earth"..."with him a thousand years" (Rev 5:10, 20:6).

This earthly reign of Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of God's promise to King David that there would never fail of his seed one to sit on his throne (II Sam 7:12, Jn 7:42). It is the completion of God's commandment to Adam to have dominion over the earth (Gen 1:28), a sabbath rest to the people of God (Heb 4:1), the Day of the Lord (I Thess 5:2), and much, much more. What a blessed fact that we, God's people, can be a part of it with Him. The participation of believers in this Millennial reign of Christ is one of the most neglected parts of the gospel. Too often we have skipped over this most serious subject while looking towards going to heaven for eternity.

Yes, we should set our affections on things above, and it is true that our reward is laid up for us in heaven, but the Bible teaches that when Jesus Christ returns He is bringing these rewards to earth with Him (Rev 22:12). I am not suggesting that we fill our minds with earthly things, but that we prepare to bring the heavenly things to earth. This is part of the gospel. The Kingdom reign of Jesus Christ is an indispensable part of what He came for and is going to do. And our role in this plan is of the utmost importance. So central is the idea of the coming Kingdom to the gospel that when Jesus taught His disciples to pray, the very first petition He spoke was "Thy kingdom come...on earth," just as it now is in heaven (Mt 6:10 NASB). It should be

very significant to us that the first thing which our Lord taught us to ask for was the arrival on earth of God's kingdom. Also, a great many parables which He taught were about the coming Kingdom and what it would be like. Certainly we should not treat this subject as unimportant or inconsequential. Rather, with the return of the Lord drawing nigh, it is something to which all of God's children need to give serious and prolonged consideration.

There is no way for the people of God to circumvent the Kingdom. It is a part of God's plan for the earth in which we will all participate in some fashion or other. The amazing but largely unannounced truth is that what we do today has everything to do with what our role in that Kingdom will be. No matter how old we are, our time on the earth is not "just about over." We still have at least 1,000 years to work together with our Lord for the accomplishment of His purposes in this world. Our faithfulness, our diligence and in fact our whole manner of living in this present world will be the determining factor for what role Christ gives us in His Kingdom when He returns. Can this be any surprise? Even in this earthly realm people give places of responsibility and honor to those who are hard working and faithful. Does not Jesus say that He will reward each man according to his works (Rev 22:12, I Cor 3:14)? This is exactly what He will do.

With this in mind, in the following chapters we will examine several aspects of the Kingdom which have great relevance to us today. Many of these truths may seem startling but I beg you for your own sake, do not close your mind to them. After reading this book, search the scriptures for yourself to see if these things are true. By all means do not be talked out of them by some well-meaning individual without looking into it thoroughly. The coming Kingdom has much to do with you and no one else can change your part in it. "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rm 14:12).

"And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt 8:11,12).



