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THE SURE WORD by Jonnie Hutchison

Article Title:

THE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM

Some believe that the Kingdom of God spoken of in the Bible is not yet in existence. They believe that Jesus intended to set up the Kingdom of God at His first coming but, because the Jews rejected Jesus and crucified Him, He instead established the church as a substitute until He establishes the Kingdom of God when He comes again. It is also believed that this Kingdom will be an earthly kingdom established in the city of Jerusalem and that Christ will literally reign on David's literal throne over this Kingdom for a thousand years. There are several contradictions to Bible teaching in these speculations.

First, Jesus did not come the first time to establish an earthly kingdom. He came the first time for the express purpose of dying on the cross to redeem man from sin. "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, **to redeem** those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons" (Galatians 4:4-5). The familiar words of John 3:16 emphasize the reason why God sent Jesus into the world. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." Hebrews 2:9 reads, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone." Yes, Jesus came the first time to fulfill God's plan to die for our sins (Phil. 2:5-8; 1 John 4:9-10).

Second, Jesus affirmed that His kingdom was not an earthly kingdom. Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you a king?" Jesus did not deny that He would be King, but He did deny that His kingdom was earthly in its nature. "Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here." (John 18:36). While the Jews were looking for the promised Messiah of the Old Testament to establish an earthly political kingdom like that which existed in the days of King David, Jesus indicated that His kingdom would be spiritual, not earthly. Later, the inspired Paul would write, "for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17).

Third, the Kingdom of God existed in the first century. It was established on the first Pentecost following the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (Acts 2). Paul wrote that both he and the Colossians Christians had been "translated" (past tense) into the Kingdom of God's dear Son" (Colossians 1:13). How could this be if the Kingdom is yet future? More to follow next week. Thanks for reading.