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THE SURE WORD By Jonnie Hutchison

Article Title

WHEN THE KINGDOM CAME

Some are looking for Jesus to establish an earthly kingdom when He comes again. The Bible teaches that the kingdom has already been established. Jesus denied that the nature of His kingdom was earthly or political. He said, "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). The spiritual kingdom prophesied by the Old Testament prophets was established in the first century. Paul said that both he and the Colossian Christians had already been "translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son" (Col. 1:13). John said that he was in the kingdom when he wrote the book of Revelation (Rev. 1:9).

When Jesus began His earthly ministry the Bible tells us, "Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel." (Mark 1:14-15). "at hand" clearly indicates a time of nearness. How near was the kingdom to being established when Jesus uttered these words? Later, in Mark 9:1 Jesus said, "...Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here **who will not taste death** till they **see the kingdom of God present with power.**" Read this passage again very carefully. Jesus indicated that some of the very people who were standing with Him and heard Him speak would still be alive when the kingdom came with power. Did Jesus get it wrong? Are people from the first century still living? No. Jesus was right. Note that the kingdom would come when the power came. What power? After His resurrection from the dead and shortly before His ascension into heaven, the apostles asked Jesus, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus answered, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive **power** when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." This "power" of the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus came upon them on the very next Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). Jesus said the kingdom would come when the power came, and the power came on that Pentecost Day, thus that is when the spiritual kingdom of God was established. The kingdom and the church are the same divine institution. Those added by the Lord to His church are citizens in the kingdom of God (Acts 2:47; Eph. 2:19-22; 1 Tim. 3:15).

When Jesus comes again he will not establish an earthly kingdom. Rather, He will deliver His spiritual kingdom to God the Father to exist eternally with Him in heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:24; Col. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:4).