

MAT711 THE COMING OF THE KINGDOM

INTRODUCTION

This course will cover the coming of the Kingdom through diving deeper into the background, the presence, the Gospel, the life, the church and the final appearance of the Kingdom. The class is taught in 8 lessons.

Following the ministry of John, the Baptist, the Lord Jesus appeared in Israel and proclaimed, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (Matt. 4:17). He did not give any further explanation. This is an indication that the expression "*the kingdom of heaven*" was not an unknown concept to those to whom His message was addressed. What was exceptional about first John the Baptist's ministry and then that of Jesus is not that they spoke of "*the kingdom of heaven*." What was exceptional is the fact that they announced that this kingdom was near at hand, it was about to come, and indeed, as we shall see, Jesus even announced that it had now come.

A characteristic feature of these prophecies foretelling the future coming of God's royal rule is the description of that coming kingdom in relation to Israel: Israel will be restored as a nation; the LORD will set His throne in Jerusalem; the enemy nations will come to pay homage to the LORD at Jerusalem. But comingled with the references to national Israel are descriptions of events and relationships that transcend the earthly, indicating that what is envisioned here is not merely a return to the theocracy as it existed in the Old Testament dispensation.

In the prophetic descriptions both of the judgment to come as well as the salvation of the LORD's people we find traits that transcend present temporal reality as we know it in this world, traits that can only pertain to an entirely new dispensation. What we discover is that nothing less than a new heaven and a new earth will come into existence (Isa. 65:17; 66:22); in distinction to the eternal woe that will be the final fate of the wicked (Isa. 66:24), the redeemed will enter into an eternal state of bliss in the presence of the LORD that exceeds all earthly comprehension (Isa. 60:18-21). Thus, it becomes evident that, although the future transcendent state is presented in earthly and nationalistic terms, it clearly exceeds the temporal. Stated another way, the earthly and nationalistic presentation found in the prophets is typological of the transcendent, a transcendent that is so far beyond present human comprehension that it must, by sort of analogy, be communicated in terms that were familiar to the audience to whom the prophets brought their divine message.

Now it is true that those prophetic passages that foretell the coming state in which the LORD will manifest His kingship in all of its eschatological fullness often make no mention of the Messianic King. However, the two (the full manifestation of the LORD's kingship and the rule of the Messiah) cannot be separated, because what is said about the coming reign of God is likewise descriptive of the messianic kingdom of peace (cf. Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-9). As Ridderbos expresses it, "it is the LORD who will again assert His rule over Israel [i.e., His covenant people] and maintain His kingship over the whole world in and through the coming Messiah-King."

We can say, then, that in the Old Testament the expression, “the kingdom of God,” does not yet occur as it will in the New Testament, where its coming becomes a dominant motif. Nevertheless, the awareness of a coming kingdom of God, consisting in the universal divine kingship over the entire world, for the good of His people and for the overthrow of any power that opposes His rule, has from old times been one of the central tenets of Israel’s expectation of salvation. Based on the divine revelation that God is King (i.e., the timeless character of the LORD’s kingship), by divine revelation there arises the expectation that He will finally exercise His kingship in an intensified and eschatological manner (His future kingship).

Learn more by purchasing the entire course that covers the following topics:

Lesson One – The Background And The Character Of The Kingdom
Lesson Two – The Presence Of The Kingdom Part 1
Lesson Three – The Presence Of The Kingdom Part 2
Lesson Four – The Gospel Of The Kingdom
Lesson Five – Life In The Kingdom Part 1
Lesson Six – Life In The Kingdom Part 2
Lesson Seven – The Kingdom And The Church
Lesson Eight – The Final Eschatological Appearance Of The Kingdom