

JESUS: “Behold, the Kingdom of God is Within You” – Are These Words to Be Taken Literally?

Jan Lilleby



It happens from time to time that someone throw this quote from Jesus at me in disputes – used in the way of intending to tell me that this kingdom is not physical, but spiritual only. In other words, they mean

to say to me that Jesus will not come and establish His kingdom on earth, physical and political.

“No, He said that the kingdom of God is not coming so that it could be observed with our eyes, but it will be within us...thought and mind, right?” Luke 17:20, 21.

Sorry – but this is entirely wrong. Jesus did not speak of His coming to earth in a direct manner here. But He told the people (the Pharisees who questioned Him as opponents) so they would understand that He could not be their king unless they first repented and took Him to heart believing on Him! The cause of the kingdom was a matter of faith and trust and submission to Jesus Messiah. And the Pharisees rejected Him

and opposed Him.

In other words, in this phase of Bible history (His First Advent) it was the will of God that Israel as a nation should repent and believe on Jesus. In first doing so and also taking the baptism, then the kingdom of God on earth in Israel would have been established and Jesus to take rule from the throne of David on the Temple Mount, Zion.

Check out the two early speeches of Peter in Acts 2 and 3. *"Whom heaven must receive until the time for the restoration of all that God spoke by the mouth of all His holy prophets for ages past"*, said Peter. And in Acts 3:19 he had referred to the *"times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."* Meaning of course that the second Advent of Christ would come as soon as the whole nation had repented, believing on Jesus and taken the water rite, as expressed in verse 20: *"And that He may send to you the Christ, Who before was designated and appointed for you – even Jesus."*

Peter's two speeches from Acts 2 and 3 (and other speeches) were never meant or addressed to the church that is – us – the ***international body of believers***, like for instance you often hear from the Pentecostal camp. Also other denominations have much of the same views on Scripture.

Peter was an apostle together with the eleven, to Israel only and to promote the coming of the promised kingdom with Jesus on the throne of David, and it should all happen as soon as Israel repented and got baptized. They preached the ***national Gospel of the kingdom*** of God on earth, the prophesied millennial kingdom. A private message addressed to Israel only.

Acts 1:3, 6 points toward such a ministry for the apostles,

"To them also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many convincing demonstrations, appearing to them during forty days and talking about the things of the kingdom of

*God. – – – So, when they were assembled, they asked Him, Lord, is this the time (coming of the Holy Spirit, verse 5) when You will **reestablish the kingdom and restore it to Israel?**”.*

It had nothing to do with our present hope of salvation, which is the heaven up above where Christ now resides. It was only the kingdom for Israel here on earth.

The Gospel we find in these historical scriptures, the four Gospels, Acts and also the doctrinal epistles written during that interval of time, is but the Gospel of the millennial earthly kingdom in Israel. A national Gospel addressed to Israel.

But the Gospel we have today – given us through Paul’s ministry – is an international free Gospel of Grace for all the nations. Heaven up above is our hope of salvation, NOT the physical earthly kingdom to come on earth in Israel!

Our Gospel of salvation emerged through revelation given Paul for us, after the closing of Acts in 62 AD.

We find Paul pounding on the shut door of Jewry in Rome, as he tried to the very last minute to give them the kingdom Gospel, suspecting it was to be ended any time then. And it did end, as we find the new Grace Gospel for all nations in the epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians. Israel refused to repent nationally, so the kingdom on earth was suspended from God’s side, He broke all contact with His covenant people from that moment on.

This happening had come right after Paul quoted them Is. 6 of their national blindness, deafness and lack of faith and repentance...in Acts 28:25-28, even if it stretched about two years before the crack happened. And shortly after that, God sent the prophesied destruction upon the disobedient nation, scattering them in the civilized world using the Roman Armies 70 AD.

What Peter had warned Israel of in Acts 3:22, 23 of their extermination, first spoken by Moses in Deut. 18:15-19, had now happened. *A total disaster annulled the nation, shipping the survivors of the war down to Alexandria to be sold as slaves.* Josephus the historian, reported of all males above the age of 17 years was taken, along with spouses. Thus fulfilling Moses' prophecy in Deut. 28:68.

It has become a great misfortune, a doctrinal set-back, and spiritual malice within Christianity that most pastors, evangelists and preachers are actually using the ***national Jewish Gospel of the kingdom*** on earth to preach to the world of the free grace of God, which we can only find in the ***international free grace Gospel*** for all believers, given us through Paul.

One of the reasons I have mentioned is that they will not recognize and accept as truth that the four Gospels and Acts, and the epistles written during Acts period, was concerning the Jewish national kingdom Gospel only. The millennial kingdom promised Israel through the prophets.

The fact that the kingdom of God in the four gospels and Acts as well as in all epistles written during Acts period, speaks of a ***physical visible real kingdom*** with its politics and rule and law, is clear as crystal as we read Gabriel's message to Virgin Mary:

Luke 1:31-33 in particular: *"You will become pregnant and will give birth to a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God give to Him the throne of His forefather David. **And He will reign over the house of Jacob throughout the ages; and of His reign there will be no end.**"*

Matt. 5:34, 35 confirm the truth that Jesus shall rule Israel as their king in Jerusalem – whereas, we have this clear concept of a physical political theocratic kingdom

here on earth:

“But I tell you, Do not bind yourselves by an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is the throne of God; Or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King (Jesus Messiah).”

Here we learn of two important facts in one breath,

1 – Heaven is the throne of God, so therefore it cannot be David’s throne. This is found on Zion in Jerusalem, the so-called Temple Mount.

2 – Jerusalem is the place where Jesus – the Great King (!) shall rule from in His nation Israel. A physical kingdom on earth. Then the words of The Lord’s Prayer will be fulfilled, Thy kingdom come, Your will be done, as in heaven so also on earth.

Thereby falls to the ground the wrong/naïve misunderstanding of the Bible where Jesus said that the kingdom of God is within His believers.

The Revelation Book sweeps in with fanfares and salutes, as we read of the establishing of this prophesied physical millennial kingdom in Israel, Rev. 20:4,

*“Then I saw thrones, and sitting on them were those to whom authority to act as judges and to pass sentence was entrusted. Also I saw the souls of those who had been slain with axes (beheaded) for their witnessing to Jesus and for the word of God, and who had refused to pay homage to the beast or his statue and had not accepted his mark (see Rev. 13) or permitted it to be stamped on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived again (resurrected) and **ruled with Christ** a thousand years.”*

These martyrs came out of the Great Tribulation in Israel and are resurrected from the dead...made members of the

government of Christ in the millennial kingdom. In Rev. 19 we read of Jesus arriving from heaven with His mighty armies of angels, taking all power of rule on earth. Chapters 19 and on are chronological.

Dan. 2:44 is likewise very clear on the same issue – this kingdom will be physical political theocratic and militarily organized by God and Christ,

*“And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven **set up a kingdom** which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people (Israel); but it shall break and crush and consume all these kingdoms and it shall stand forever.”*

Using the word ‘Forever’ – derives from the Greek *aion* which means dispensation or a certain period of calendar-time, and is not used in the meaning of everlasting, – existing for eternity.

How long will the kingdom last?

One millennia – **a thousand years** like we read from Rev. 20:4. In Rev 20:2 we have a corresponding one thousand years, as we find that Satan shall be jailed in the Abyss with chains. He cannot operate or influence anything on earth or in heaven in that time. Good to know!

There are a great number of inexperienced, often young, Christ believers out there in Christianity. I meet them every so often, now and then. Unfortunately one finds mature seasoned Christian believers, committing same mistakes as the younger ones. It is good that we have a drive of curiosity in the Bible study and reading and speculate on many things trying to find out what it says. But in the example I try to give by this little article, I have to say that the use of inconsistent Bible quotations, out of proper context, is childish and immature, perhaps well-meant but out of place still. It lacks Bible systematics and logic.

Are you part of such a group of naïve childish 'club' of believers, rushing nonchalant and unawares through the Bible, quoting without thought verses totally out of context?

Unfortunately I have met experienced evangelists also, that has fallen down in such a category, which are using the Bible often out of context. Displaying, without really being aware of it, a childish mind and naivety.

Here is a short listing of the expression 'Kingdom of God' or equal, in Acts – thus always meaning the physical millennial kingdom to come in Israel at the Second Advent of Christ, the hope of salvation of the believers in those times 32 AD until 60-62 AD,

Acts 1:3 “..the things of the kingdom of God”

Acts 1:6 “..when You will reestablish the kingdom to Israel”

Acts 14:22 “..enter the kingdom of God”

Acts 19:8 “..pleading about the kingdom of God”

Acts 28:31 “Preaching to them the kingdom of God”

When we thus *read between* those passages – a time-span of 30 years – that it says for instance “Preaching the grace gospel of God”, “Preached to them the gospel of Jesus the Messiah”, “Teaching the word of God among them” and other similar statements witnessing that the apostles did preach to people, it was NEVER the free international Gospel of Grace like what Paul started to teach as we come to the epistle to the Ephesians/Colossians, but the *national Jewish gospel* of the earthly kingdom of God in Israel.

We can find the international free Grace Gospel ONLY according to Paul's revelation mentioned in the two said epistles. They were written after the closing of Acts, about 62 AD. This is OUR Gospel, and our hope of salvation is NOT the millennial kingdom, but it is heaven up above.

Shouldn't we try to keep right track here and ***go with the***

international free Grace Gospel given us through Paul's ministry, and so studying the Bible according to that setting? Right division of the Word of God is the way to go.

Finally, allow me to recommend to you the fine video-clip with Bible expositor ***Michael Penny***, picked up from Youtube, lasting a short hour. It is to be found here in my site. He holds the same Biblical views as myself, and he touches a few more points than I have in this article, useful for you to listen to. The video has excellent sound quality.