

From the West Meadow
Pastor Wes Higgins

At one point, the Gospel of Luke records that the disciples asked Jesus Christ to teach them how to pray. Jesus responded by giving them an outline prayer normally referred to as “the Lord’s Prayer”. In this prayer, after the opening salutation to the Father acknowledging His holiness, Jesus asks us to pray that God’s Kingdom come.

The Gospels are full of references to and parables concerning the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, as Matthew puts it. Mark 1:14 tells us that Jesus came preaching repentance, and that the kingdom of God is at hand. So, why is it so important to ask God for His kingdom? What are we really asking for when we ask, “Your kingdom come”?

The Jewish nation at that time was living in expectation of the Messiah—a king who would set them free from Roman bondage. John 6:15 records that the crowd was at the point of using force to make Jesus Christ king. At the time of His ascension, the apostles asked, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” (Act 1:6) The kingdom of God was real in the hearts and minds of first century Jews—to them it was freedom from bondage and oppression.

In fact, Luke records Jesus declaring He had come to set free the oppressed, to give sight to those blinded by this world, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:16-21). The “acceptable year” refers to the year of Jubilee, when the financially and physically bound were to be set free (Leviticus 25:8-17).

The kingdom of God is all about freedom—being set free from the bondage of this world and Satan’s influence. To the ancient Israelite, it was the Promised Land. To the first century Jews, it was a Jewish state free of Roman bondage. To the Christian, it is a deep and abiding relationship with God, now and into all eternity (Romans 8:35-39).

Revelation chapter 21 presents a picture of the kingdom of God that is both physical and spiritual, a time when God will dwell with humankind and “they shall be His people” (Revelation 21:3). The Bible describes it as a time when no one will have to teach his neighbor or brother “saying, ‘Know the Lord’, for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.” (Hebrews 8:11) All people will do what is right in their own eyes (because they will look at things from God’s perspective, through His eyes), because they will be like Jesus Christ (1 John 3:2), with God’s law written in their minds and on their hearts (Hebrews 8:10).

This world as it exists today is not of God’s making. It is the result of humankind going its own way, influenced by the god of this age (2 Corinthians 4:4). As Christians we are called to be sensitive to the needs of the world. When we look around us our hearts grieve and groan as we cry out to God, “Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”! (Matthew 6:10)

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