

Was Jesus Mistaken?

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Ten centuries before Jesus' birth, the prophet Nathan, on behalf of Jehovah, told David that He would set one of David's seed upon his throne in an eternal kingdom (2 Sam. 7:12-13).

Five centuries later, Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar that, in the days of the Roman Emperors, God would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed but would also stand forever (Dan. 2:44).

Rome ruled the world at the time the angel Gabriel told Mary she was to conceive by means of the Holy Spirit, and that her son would also be the Son of God. Gabriel also stated that God would fulfill in Jesus Nathan's promise concerning David's throne and an everlasting kingdom (Luke 1:26-35).

The clear implication of Gabriel's message was that the establishment of Jesus' everlasting kingdom would coincide with His initial appearance among men. Such was the unquestionable understanding of Jesus Himself.

- Jesus preached, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mat. 4:17), as John did before Him (3:2). Jesus initially sent the twelve and the seventy to preach the same message (10:7; Luke 10:9). *At hand* means "nearby," "within reach." Did the Son of God preach, and authorize others to preach, a lie? Did He make a mistake?
- Jesus went about preaching "the gospel [good news] of the kingdom" (9:35). Did He intentionally, or even ignorantly, raise false hopes in his hearers? Was He mistaken?
- Jesus told the apostles some of them would live to "see the kingdom come with power" (Mark 9:1). Did He mislead them? Did He make a mistake?
- Jesus told Peter He would give to him the "keys of the kingdom" (Mat. 16:19). If the kingdom was not established in Peter's lifetime, he could hardly use the "keys" Jesus promised to give him. Did He make an empty promise to Peter? Was He mistaken?
- Jesus instituted His supper, which was to be eaten and drunk in His kingdom (Luke 22:19-20, 29-30). The apostles understood themselves to be in the kingdom, for they observed the supper (1 Cor. 11:17-32). Did Jesus lead them astray about their being in the kingdom?

The kingdom came "with power" in the lifetime of Jesus' contemporaries (Acts 2:1-47). As people obeyed the Gospel, they were "delivered...out of the power of darkness, and translated...into the kingdom of the Son..." (Col. 1:13). To deny that the kingdom came in the first century is to affirm that Jesus was mistaken when he declared and commissioned others to declare that it was near them and that it would come in their lifetimes. Jesus could not be the Savior of mankind if He made a mistake.

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