

# A Vain and Useless Hope

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Millions of people who profess faith in Jesus Christ as God's Son are entertaining a vain and useless hope concerning His Kingdom. It is vain because their concept of the Kingdom of Christ is never promised in the Scriptures and will not come to pass. It is useless because the Kingdom that Christ reigns over is present, not future; men can be a part of it today. Consider the following truths about the Kingdom of Christ.

The Jews thought Christ came to establish a literal kingdom on earth and they tried to force a crown upon His head (John 6:15). Jesus refused, teaching that He did not come to establish a worldly kingdom, but a spiritual Kingdom (Luke 17:20-21; John 18:36). Only if this were so, could it be a Kingdom that would never be destroyed, but that would stand forever (Dan. 2:44). All earthly empires, kingdoms, and governments shall someday perish; only a spiritual Kingdom can survive the destruction of the physical universe at the coming of the Lord (2 Pet. 3:10-11).

Theological theorists of the present have made the same mistake about Jesus' Kingdom that the Jews made – they are looking for a literal, political kingdom when Christ comes again. As seen above, this was never the plan of Christ. To adopt this mistaken view of the kingdom makes Jesus a false prophet, a fool, and a failure. If He came to establish a political kingdom, but couldn't or didn't (obviously, He didn't, for whatever reason), then He failed to do what He came to do. If He came to establish a political kingdom but refused the crown that His countrymen eagerly offered Him, then He was a fool. More serious is the charge that He was a false prophet if He had in mind a literal earthly kingdom and if this kingdom has not yet come.

John, Jesus' forerunner, came preaching, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Mat. 3:2). Jesus began preaching the same message after His baptism and told the twelve and the seventy respectively, to preach it (Mat. 4:17; 10:7; Luke 10:9). "At hand" doesn't mean several centuries later, but soon or very soon. How soon? Jesus answers: "There are some here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, til they see the Kingdom of God come with power" (Mark 9:1). Either the Kingdom came in the first century or some of those people then living are still living. If neither of these is true, then Jesus was a false prophet.

The Kingdom came "in the fullness of time" in God's wisdom, just as Christ did (Gal. 4:4). Jesus was talking about the Kingdom when He said, "I will build my church" (Mat. 16:18).

In the next verse He calls it His Kingdom. The “keys of the kingdom” were used on the day of Pentecost when men were told what to do to be saved, willingly obeyed, were saved, and added to the church (Acts 2:37–38, 41, 47). Christians were not waiting for the eternal Kingdom in the first century; they had received it because they were in the church (Heb. 12:23, 28). The saints in Colossae were not waiting for the Kingdom, they were in it (Col. 1:2, 13). Christ will not begin reigning over His Kingdom when He comes again; He has been reigning over it ever since His resurrection (Acts 2:29–36). When He comes again, He will not establish a Kingdom and reign on earth one year or a thousand years, but will deliver the Kingdom, His church, over which He now reigns, back to the Father for eternity (1 Cor. 15:23–26). Do not be misled by a vain and useless hope.

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