

THE SCHEME OF REDEMPTION QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Program #1040

Eddie Parrish & Mark Teske

EDDIE: Did Jesus accomplish what God sent Him to accomplish when He came to earth, or did He not? That's our topic of discussion today on *The Truth In Love*.

EDDIE: We want to thank you for joining us for *The Truth In Love* today. Alongside Mark Teske, I'm Eddie Parrish, and we welcome you to our program. This is the last in a series of lessons that we've been doing on God's scheme of redemption, or God's plan for the salvation and redemption of mankind. We want to take a few moments to review where we've been on this series of lessons, and then we'll look at some questions that often come up in discussions of this sort.

MARK: We started out this series by talking about God's eternal purpose, and the fact that He planned for man's redemption before the foundation of the world. And we took time and discussed what that really meant, that He promised and purposed in His mind within Himself not only that Jesus would come, but that He would establish His church.

EDDIE: Right. And passages, like Ephesians chapters 1 and 3, talk about God's eternal purpose and things planned before the foundation of the world. Then not long after the creation, sin became a reality, as God knew that it would. In Genesis 3, when Adam and Eve sinned, God then began, at that point, to enact His plan and started to reveal portions of that plan to certain individuals by means of promises. Genesis 3:15 was one of those, where He promised that one day the seed of woman would come and bruise Satan's head or crush his power and his authority. Promises were also made to men like Abraham, in Genesis

12 and 22, where God said, “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice,” (Genesis 22:18). Then the promise is restated to Isaac, to Jacob and to Judah, where God through history is promising different ones the same thing, but narrowing the scope of the promise over time from a universal promise (the seed of woman), to a national promise (through the family of Abraham), and a tribal promise (through the tribe of Judah) and so forth. And we looked at a number of those promises.

MARK: And after those promises, we then get to the section of prophecy where God used the prophets to again unveil bits and pieces of His plan. We looked at Isaiah 2, and we saw some of the promises that He had for His coming kingdom. We also looked at Daniel 2, which told us not only a little bit about the kingdom, but when that kingdom would come. And there are some prophets that we didn't even spend time discussing such as Joel 2, which the apostle Peter quotes on the Day of Pentecost and also deals with the coming of the kingdom, as Peter himself tells us in Acts 2.

EDDIE: Right. Yes, that's a good memory tool on the prophecies and fulfillment of the kingdom. Isaiah 2, Daniel 2 and Joel 2 are then fulfilled in Acts 2. If we can remember that, it will help us to tie together some of these prophecies with the place where they were fulfilled. You referred to the prophets mentioning the timing of the kingdom, as Daniel said, “In the days of these” (Roman) “kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom,” (Daniel 2:44). And we'll talk a little bit more about that in our session today.

But we went from purpose, to promise, to prophecy and to preparation. There were a number of things that happened immediately before the establishment of the kingdom whereby God was preparing the people of that day for the kingdom's arrival, such as the work of John the Baptist. He would teach people that “the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2). And a lot of the teaching that Jesus did, especially in His parables, was to prepare people for the kingdom. How many of His parables did He begin by saying the kingdom of heaven is like this or that, to try to teach people not only the nature of the kingdom, but to teach them something about the conduct that would be expected of those citizens of the kingdom. So there was a lot of preparation that went into the coming of the kingdom just prior to its final arrival.

MARK: And the preparation includes other things that aren't even

mentioned specifically in scripture that helped to usher in the Lord's church. We talk about the common Greek language. Alexander the Great, as he conquered, brought a common language that transcended all these different countries, so that with one language, (the original language of the New Testament) communication could happen among all those people. The road system, as well as the fact that the Roman Empire was in charge, meant that, politically, it was possible to cross what were uncrossable borders beforehand. All of these things go together to bring about that fullness and completeness, and the totality of time so that the stage was just perfectly set for Jesus to walk on the scene.

EDDIE: Right. That was very well said. And we kept our alliteration going, from purpose to promise to prophecy, and to preparation. Then we looked at perfection and surveyed Acts 2, where all of these prophecies about the coming of the kingdom, or the church, came to a head and we saw how the church was established and some 3,000 people were added to it that day, and then others added to it after that on a continual basis. Then last time, we concluded the main part of this series with the church in perpetuation and how the church has been, and is a part of God's plan. We also discussed that God's plan for man's salvation is perpetuated through the church today, because the saved are added to the church by God (Acts 2:41-47). And now we have come full circle from the plan in the mind of God, before the foundation of the world, to the plan enacted and the church established, and now the church continuing even to this day as people obey the gospel, just as they did in the first century. The Lord adds them to the church just like He added those to the church in the first century.

But a lot of times, when you discuss matters related to the kingdom and to prophecy and things of that sort, questions arise, and people object to some of the things that are said. So we wanted to spend this last session today addressing some of those concerns and some of those statements and objections that people make and sometimes come up.

MARK: Eddie, as you introduced this session, you asked the question, "Did Jesus do what it was that God planned Him to do?" I think that really is the fundamental question that we need to answer. Did He do what God set out for Him to do? The answer to that really answers our whole discussion here.

EDDIE: Yes. It's a simple question. And we'll apply that question to

a number of things that were said by the prophets and by Jesus. But the question that we have to keep coming back to is this: Did things happen the way the prophets and Jesus and others said they would? And we'll see that yes, it did happen that way.

MARK: I would challenge anybody who says, "That's not the way it happened," to answer this: If it didn't happen that way, why didn't it? What was the reason? As we talk about the church, people might say, "Well, the lesson you did on the church, that's good in theory, but that's not how it works in real life." Why not? Why doesn't it work like that? God set it forth in His plan. This is what He expected. And mankind is sinful. God knows that. That's why this whole plan is in place. We wouldn't carry it out flawlessly, but that's no reason for us to give up and say that it doesn't matter, because we still must strive to do His will. We have to try and find the pattern. So if Jesus didn't do what He said He was going to do, and if the establishment of the church wasn't what He was set to accomplish, why not?

EDDIE: That's a good question. And it's a question that people have to address. A lot of times, some of the objections come up in discussions of God's plan for redemption and the kingdom and the church, etc. Objections are often raised about the church and the kingdom being the same entity, or the same body. And some folks believe that Jesus, when He came to earth, intended to establish an earthly or political kingdom. But when it became evident that He was being rejected by the people and was ultimately going to be killed, that the church then became the secondary plan, if you will, to get the world by until such time as the Lord could return a second time and then establish His kingdom like He intended the first time. And so, in that theory of things, the church and the kingdom are not the same thing.

So almost all of this hinges on properly identifying the nature of the kingdom of Old Testament prophecy. We have to ask ourselves and let the Bible answer the question: What was the nature of the kingdom that we read about in Old Testament prophecy? Was it political in nature and physical and earthly, or was it a spiritual kingdom? And if we're able to answer that question, then the rest of this whole issue will take care of itself if we get that question right.

MARK: And as we talked about before, the misconceptions were there even in the times of Jesus. In John 6, we see the people who wanted to, by force, make Jesus an earthly king. And He rejected that

outright.

EDDIE: Right.

MARK: At that point, the people had not rejected Him, but He was rejecting that idea for them. So clearly, if we use our football analogy, if that was God's plan, then Jesus wasn't paying attention during the huddle before He went to the line of scrimmage. He wasn't paying attention, because when He had the opportunity, He didn't take it. And obviously, the only thing that we can conclude is that He wasn't supposed to take that opportunity. He was supposed to reject that. The kingdom was not supposed to be physical or earthly, but spiritual.

EDDIE: Yes. A lot of the prophecies that address the timing of the kingdom's establishment will also help us to see that the prophets could not have been predicting an earthly, political kingdom. Daniel 2 is one example of that. We spent one of our sessions talking about the prophecy in Daniel 2 where Nebuchadnezzar had the dream that really troubled him. It was a dream where he saw this great image, with the head made of gold, the chest and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet a mixture of iron and clay. A stone strikes that image in the feet, the image crumbles, and the stone grows into a mountain that fills the whole earth. That was Nebuchadnezzar's dream. He wanted to know what it meant. Well, Daniel, God's prophet, gave him the answer to that.

MARK: And he said you, Nebuchadnezzar, are that head of gold, and your kingdom is going to be followed directly by this silver kingdom, which is the Medo-Persian empire, as you identified. And the Medo-Persian empire was then defeated by Alexander the Great, and the Greek empire, then the Macedonian empire, in sequence. So many people want to put big gaps in between there. Well, a statue doesn't have gaps. It follows one after the other. And after the Greek comes the Roman age. "And in the days of these kings," he said, I will establish my kingdom (Daniels 2:44).

EDDIE: That's right. And we've got to let Daniel say what he said. And he said in 2:44 of his book, "In the days of these kings." He is talking about the days of that fourth kingdom. We made this point in the previous lesson. Daniel stopped counting at four. We can't, with any authority from heaven, start increasing the number of kingdoms in order to somehow create a scenario in which we've got the kingdom yet to come. You see, if Daniel said it's going to happen in the days of the

Roman kings, then our only choices are these: Either God's kingdom was established in the days of the Roman kings, or Daniel was a false prophet.

MARK: And if we pull our illustration out a little further, then Daniel must not have been paying attention in the huddle as well.

EDDIE: Yes. You have to choose one or the other. If a person does not hold to the fact that God's kingdom was established in the days of the Roman kings, then he has a problem somewhere, with either God didn't know what He was talking about when He told Daniel to say it, Daniel misspoke, or the kingdom was established. It has to be that. Now, having said that, if Daniel was a true prophet (and Jesus said he was in Matthew 24) then what kingdom was established in the days of the Roman kings that could be called God's kingdom? It certainly wasn't anything political.

MARK: There's nothing that's been political that's transcended all that period of time.

EDDIE: That's right. So it must have been a kingdom that had a nature different from the political, earthly kingdoms with which most folks are familiar. It had to be something else. It had to be of a different type, and a different nature. Then when you tie in New Testament passages, it fits perfectly. Jesus, in Mark 9:1, said to some of his contemporaries, "there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom."

MARK: The only conclusion is either those men have not yet died, or the kingdom has already come.

EDDIE: That's it. It has to be one of those two scenarios.

MARK: I'll throw out a third scenario, that Jesus didn't know what He was talking about. That's an indictment we don't want to make.

EDDIE: Yes. I'm not going there. Who would want to lay it at the feet of Jesus that He said that the kingdom was going to come in their lifetime, and then find out that He is now in the position of having to say oops, sorry, I missed that one, I didn't know that things had changed, or nobody gave me the memo. That is not possible.

MARK: He was flawless. He was perfect in all that He said and in all that He did. And this is one other place where He was perfect. We see the fulfillment of what Jesus said as we turn to Acts 1:8. We see Him restating the promise that not many days hence, they would be baptized

by the Holy Spirit, as the Father promised. Then in Acts 2:1-4, we see that promise fulfilled, that power that came upon them through the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, just like Jesus promised. That's the power. As you look at Mark 9:1 and read that the kingdom is going to come with power, and then look for power, and there it is. It caught the attention of all of the people. They saw the power happening there. That's a good indicator for us that's what He was talking about.

EDDIE: Yes. If the kingdom was going to come with power, (Mark 9:1), and the power would come with the Holy Spirit, (Acts 1:8) then if we find out when the Spirit came bringing the power, then we'll know when the kingdom came. And Acts 2:4 is clear. The Spirit came in Acts 2, and the power came with the Spirit, and the kingdom would come with the power. So Acts 2 is when the kingdom came, if Jesus' words mean anything at all, and obviously they do.

Now, when we talk about the kingdom of Old Testament prophecy, there's a question that those who say the kingdom is yet future, need to be forced to answer. And that question is this: When the prophets spoke of the coming kingdom, and when they said that the kingdom is going to be established, did the prophets see the kingdom being established when Jesus came the first time, or did they see Jesus establishing the kingdom at His second coming? What did the prophets see? When did they see it being established?

Here are the possibilities and the implications of them: If a person says that the prophets saw the kingdom coming when Jesus came the first time, that's option one. Let's say we take that option. The prophets saw Jesus establishing His political, earthly kingdom when He came the first time. If that is what the prophets saw, then the obvious question is, where is it? Where is that kingdom? If that's when the prophets saw it, and it didn't happen, then they're false prophets. Daniel, Isaiah, Micah and the others are false prophets.

MARK: Joel.

EDDIE: Yes, Joel. If it didn't happen then, they're false prophets. But, we can't have that, because Jesus referred to them as true prophets. So they must not have seen it the first time. The only other option is that they saw the kingdom being established at the Lord's second coming. When the prophets saw the kingdom and prophesied about it, they were predicting it at the second coming of Christ. That's what they saw. That's your only other option. But now here's the question that causes a

problem there: If that's the case, and if the prophets were predicting the kingdom being established at the Lord's second coming, what was the Lord doing the first time?

MARK: What was the point?

EDDIE: Why did He come the first time to try to establish a kingdom that the prophets had foreseen to be established the second time? In other words, you cast reflection upon Jesus, who evidently didn't know what the prophets saw, because here He is trying to establish a kingdom during a time frame that the prophets never predicted. Neither one of those options work, because you can't harmonize reality with either of those if the kingdom is political in nature. Now, if the kingdom is spiritual in nature...

MARK: Everything fits right into place.

EDDIE: ...Everything fits. The timing is right. It happened in the days of the Roman kings. It happened in the days of the contemporaries of Jesus, as He said it would in Mark 9:1. It fits with what John said about the coming of the kingdom, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," (Matthew 3:2). So if we understand the kingdom to be spiritual (and Jesus clearly stated it was in John 18:36), then it all fits. Jesus was standing before Pilate on trial and Pilate asked him if He was the King of the Jews. And part of His response in that interchange was, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight" (John 18:37). And in a previous lesson when we talked about that passage, we even pointed out that one of the disciples was ready and willing to take up arms and fight for Jesus and His kingdom. Peter, in the garden of Gethsemane at the time of Jesus' arrest ended up cutting off the ear of somebody as he tried, I'm sure, to kill him. But Jesus, on that occasion told Peter to put away his sword. That's not what this was about. And later He says to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." It's not from here. It's spiritual in nature.

MARK: You would expect as you read through scripture, that if Jesus really was coming to set up the kingdom, then before that fact, we would see references looking forward to the kingdom, and then after that fact, we would see references looking back at the kingdom that has already been established. And lo and behold, we do see that in scripture. In the Lord's model prayer that He gave that's accounted for several times in scripture, the part of that prayer that many people are familiar with is that Jesus taught His disciples to pray "Thy kingdom come," looking

forward to the coming kingdom. And at that point, the kingdom hadn't already come. Jesus Himself is preaching the kingdom is at hand and is near and He asked His disciples to pray that the kingdom will come. In Mark 9:1, we read that the kingdom will come in their lifetime, and they would see it come with power. And as we get into the New Testament, we see passages that look to a kingdom that has already come. One example is in Hebrews 12:28, "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom." He's talking about you and I.

EDDIE: Present tense.

MARK: Present tense. We are receiving a kingdom. So the kingdom has been established. So it's happened after Mark 9:1, and before the disciples have passed on, yet before the Hebrews writer, because it's already existing at that point. Colossians 1:13 says that He has, "Conveyed us into the kingdom." So by Colossians 1:13, we see the kingdom is already there, and as Christians, we are being put into that kingdom.

EDDIE: That's right. In the early 60's AD when the letter to the Colossians was written, Paul told the Colossian Christians that they were already in the kingdom. God has, (past tense), "delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." The Lord's kingdom was in existence in the first century. Now, when somebody comes along today and says that the kingdom is not here yet, and the kingdom's still yet future, and that we're not a part of the kingdom yet...

MARK: It was "here" back then.

EDDIE: ...Paul didn't know it, because Paul said that the Colossian Christians are in it.

MARK: The Hebrew writer said "Receiving a kingdom." The New Testament writers would have been asleep during that huddle before the game as well, because they missed it.

EDDIE: Yes. You've got a lot of people missing out on that huddle if the kingdom was political.

MARK: And for somebody to say that these things are wrong is to indict scripture and indict the basis of Christianity. If you're consistent with the way you look at this, you're making a very horrible indictment against the word of God.

EDDIE: Very true. There's a passage in one of the prophets, Daniel

7, a prophecy we didn't really cover in any detail in previous lessons, but it fits well with this whole concept of when the kingdom came, Daniel 7:13-14.

MARK: I have that right here. He prophesies, "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man" (guess who that was) "Coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days." That would be the Father. "And they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed."

EDDIE: Yes. And the important thing in that whole prophecy, as it relates to our discussion, is that one little two-letter word, "to." The text says, "One like the Son of Man came to the Ancient of Days" and there received His kingdom." Now, some people don't have it that way. They have Jesus coming from the Ancient of Days, coming from the Father back to earth, and there on earth getting His kingdom. That's not the way the prophet said it. He said that He will go from the earth to the Father, to the Ancient of Days, and when He gets there, receive His kingdom, which is exactly what Peter said in Acts 2 that Jesus did. He ascended to the right hand of God, and the kingdom came in Acts 2.

MARK: And when He comes back again, He's going to come and get the kingdom that was already established and present it to the Father as His bride on that judgment day.

EDDIE: That's right. And you can be a part of that kingdom. You can be a part of the kingdom of Christ this very day, because it already exists. The kingdom is the church. Jesus said to Peter in Matthew 16:18-19, "On this rock, I will build My church... And I will give you the keys of the kingdom." The church and the kingdom are the same thing. If you obey the gospel, the Lord will add you to His church, to His kingdom. You'll be taken out of the kingdom of darkness and put into the kingdom of His Son as the Colossians were in Colossians 1:13.

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again today, and thank you for joining us on *The Truth In Love*. We'll see you again next time.

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