

SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS FOR ADULTS

LESSON 13



THE FUTURE OF THE KINGDOM

Scripture Texts: Luke 1:33; 1 Corinthians 15:16-28; Ephesians 1:9-10; Matthew 25:31-34

The Kingdom of God is a two-phase kingdom. It has its beginning here on earth when one is saved from sin. It is eternal and is to continue on in Heaven where all the saints will reign eternally with Christ. We learned in earlier lessons that we have, through the earnest of the Spirit, Christ's promise to receive us unto Himself.

Today we learn some things about the Heavenly phase of the kingdom—the final state of the kingdom of God.

MEMORY VERSE: *And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign forever and ever. —Revelation 22:5*

To Continue Forever

Luke 1:33 When the angel, Gabriel, came to tell Mary of the coming Jesus, He said Jesus would be given the throne of David and would **reign over the house of Jacob forever**. We have seen in former lessons that Christ's kingdom was then and is now a present kingdom in the world. Yet His reign is also **forever**, of eternal quality. Gabriel said, **Of his kingdom there shall be no end**. This fulfills Isaiah's prophecy—**Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end (Isaiah 9:7)**. Not only endless, but increasing. (**Over the house of Jacob**—the children of God, or spiritual Israel. See **Romans 9:6-8**.)

1 Corinthians 15:16-23 **If in this life only we have hope in Christ**—if His power to save and bless is only for this world and ends at our death, then we are **most miserable**. Against this dark view is stated the fact that **now is Christ risen from the dead**. He can never die again. He lives and rules. This is our guarantee that our hope in Him can reach forward endlessly.

There are some who say this life is all, that when we die all is over. If that were true, even those who trust in Christ and live for Him would have no hope. One could look forward only to loss of all things. But those who believe this do not know Christ. They are the ones who have no hope. They have nothing but the haunting fear in their hearts that their theory is wrong.

Would an all-wise, all-powerful God have created a world of such marvelous beauty and fine detail for man who is so wondrously made, only to bring him to an end in eighty or ninety years? Would a great, loving God have placed hope and aspiration in him, only to dash it to pieces? Would God, through Jesus, have paid so great a cost for His kingdom, if it were not to continue on in eternity? The only sensible answer is, "NO." There are many proofs of the eternity of the kingdom as we study through God's Word.

To Be Delivered to the Father

1 Corinthians 15:24-28 At the end of time and of this world Jesus will deliver the kingdom to His Father. While He reigns previous to delivering it, Jesus will conquer all enemies, the last of which is death. The sting of death is sin. When one's sins are forgiven, one has victory over, or has conquered, death (**1 Corinthians 15:55-57**). Death is the only door through which we can move from the earthly phase of the kingdom to the Heavenly phase. Then, with warfare over, Jesus presents a free and victorious kingdom to His Father. Jesus will then turn all things back to the Father, and **be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all**.

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The Great Reunion

Ephesians 1:9-10 All things . . . in heaven, and . . . on earth are to be gathered together in the **fullness** (completion) of times. Unity is in the very nature of God. We know unity here, but here is a unity the world never knew. The saved of the human family will be united with Christ and the angelic host and whatever holy beings God included under His hand. Then those united ones—in heaven . . . in earth . . . under the earth . . . in the sea . . . will join in praise and worship, shouting, **Blessing and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever** (Revelation 5:13; Philippians 2:9-11).

Inheritance of the Righteous

Matthew 25:31-34 When Jesus comes back to deliver up His kingdom, He will bid His own **Come . . . inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world**. It is meant for them, prepared for them, and will suit them exactly. These have been in God's kingdom while living here. Then they will inherit the same kingdom expanded, united, glorified in an incorruptible body, over in the Heavenly phase—a realm freed from all limitations, sorrows, and hindrances of earth. Only to those who enter the kingdom here, is the Heavenly phase laid up as an eternal inheritance. The **Holy Spirit** received here is the **earnest of our inheritance . . .** (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Oh, won't it be wonderful there! Are you ready for His coming? It may be sooner than you think.

JUST A THOUGHT

The higher we rise, the fainter the things of this world become.