

The Gospel of the Kingdom

(by Charlie Brackett)

Jesus came "preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.'" (Mark 1:14) With usual brevity, Mark set forth what he and other inspired writers called *the gospel of the kingdom*. *Gospel* means *good news* or *good message*. God's kingdom was at hand. Its coming was near. God commands all to repent and believe that joyous message.

Never has there been a message so believable. Miraculous power proved Jesus spoke truth; *"they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them."* (Matthew 4:24) Power over demons proved His message true, and dramatically heralded the kingdom's arrival.

Accused of casting out demons by Satan's power, Jesus countered that, if true, Satan's kingdom was divided, doomed to desolation. "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God," He said, "Surely the kingdom of God has come upon you." (Matthew 12:22-30) The coming of God's kingdom was a deathblow to Satan. The struggle was only brief. Though all appeared lost at the cross, victory was snatched from death when Christ arose. The kingdom came! That good news sounded forth to every corner of the globe and still holds out hope to all sinners. It endures because the gospel of the kingdom is....

The good news of God (Romans 1:1). He is its source. Paul wrote, "'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.' But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit." (1 Corinthians 2:9, 10) Glad tidings of the kingdom are worthy of acceptance and trust.

The good news of God's Son, Jesus Christ (1 Thessalonians 3:2). He is the messenger. "God.... has in these last days spoken to us by His Son,..." (Hebrews 1:1, 2). Not only is Jesus the messenger, He is the message. The gospel presents Jesus: who He is (the Son of God), how He was declared (raised from the dead), and what He has done (made us to be His called, beloved of God). (Romans 1:1-7, 9, 16) Mark affirms that the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ was written in the prophets (Mark 1:1) Glad tidings of a coming kingdom would be incomplete without predicting, describing, and announcing the coming King.

The good news of God's grace (Acts 20:24). It is a beautiful love story, and God's grace is seen in that love. By grace He saves us and raises us up to sit in heavenly places in Christ (Ephesians 2:4-8). When one stands in God's grace, he has peace with God in His kingdom (Romans 5:1, 2; Colossians 1:13, 14). God's grace accounts for the gospel's essential goodness.

The good news of our salvation (Ephesians 1:13). The gospel is God's saving power (Romans 1:16). By it sinners believe that God has raised Jesus from the dead (Romans 10:9) and are persuaded to call on the name of the Lord to be saved (Romans 10:13). In it they learn that abiding in God's love and loving Him in return are accomplished by keeping His commands (John 15:9, 10; 1 John 5:3). By obeying in repentance and baptism (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38), they become citizens in the kingdom (Acts 2:41, 47; Col. 1:13).

The good news of hope (Colossians 1:23). Many who read this have heard and received that same hope of the gospel early Christians enjoyed. May God help us "continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast,..." that our hope in the kingdom might not diminish.