

Living in the Kingdom of God

When Jesus returns, he will set up the worldwide government of the Kingdom of God, a new world order. Not the despotic regime of a cruel tyrant, nor the indecision caused by political weakness. Jesus will be the good, caring king over a united earth, ruling by the principles of God.

Perfect government will create a world of wonderful conditions for those privileged to live in it, wherever they are. Let's consider this coming world order in a little more detail.

Good Government

A common theme in political election campaigns is 'good government', or the ability of rulers to apply sound principles for the good of all. It seems that many people have lost faith in human governments to achieve this, and turnouts in elections are often very low. In popular surveys, politicians seem to be less recognised and less trusted than celebrities!

Many families and individuals throughout the world are struggling with life and want support from their government in the basics: paying the bills, educating their children, being looked after if they are ill. If that support seems absent, they will inevitably become cynical.

The great news is that good government is at the heart of God's kingdom. And not just 'good'; the rulership will be God-given, following His principles.

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his

glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:31-32).

We are given a picture of the quality of the government:

The spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD (Isaiah 11:2).

This is not like today's leaders, however well-intentioned they may be.

Justice

As we continue to read Isaiah chapter 11 (see verses 3-4), we see that this leads to justice – for everyone. Jesus will not be fooled by clever lawyers or influenced by the wealthy and powerful, but will judge with true fairness to everyone, providing support for all who need it. He will not be weak though, and he will not tolerate wickedness or opposition to his benign rule. The impact of this is amazing:

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea (v9).

Education

Education is really important. Having education provided is a great benefit, and the quality and content of that pro-

vision is a big talking point for those who have children or are just interested in the development of young people. So in the coming kingdom, what will people be learning about? We are presented with a picture of the nations of the world coming to Jerusalem, to learn from God's appointed king. The 'syllabus' is as follows:

"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. (Isaiah 2:3).

The people of the world – young and old – will be learning about God, His laws and purpose. Putting these into practice will be part of the perfect world in which they will live.

Defence

Defence tends to be a huge preoccupation for most governments. Foreign policy is fundamental to their rulership, and the ability to fight and make war is a major spending area. This clearly will be different in the kingdom of God. With no competing rulers or countries, the need for foreign policy and weaponry will be eliminated. Staying in Isaiah chapter 2, we see exactly this:



He shall judge between the nations, and rebuke many people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (v4).

With Jesus in charge, the weapons of the world will be made harmless, turned into agricultural tools. In fact, the people of the world will no longer learn the so-called 'art' of warfare. This will be a world at real peace.

Environment

We are right to worry about the environment, whether it is changing weather patterns, global warming or the pollution of our air, rivers and seas. There are a variety of views on the causes, but all agree that our environment is less clean, less safe and less stable than it used to be. The Bible gives us insight into what the earth will be like in the Kingdom of God:

The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing (Isaiah 35:1–2).

And all of this we read, because the glory of God is present. The world will thrive, be clean, healthy and productive, as we see throughout this chapter. Verses 6–7 contain a graphic picture of springs in the desert and pools of water in the driest of places.

Health

With the power of God in play, we also see in Isaiah 35 (especially in the

verses 3–6) that illnesses and disabilities of all sorts will be healed.

There will be no need for a health service or for medical insurance; doctors and nurses will not be needed to care for the sick; *“and sorrow and sighing shall flee away”* (v10). This will be accompanied by a great long life (Isaiah 65:20) where someone dying at 100 years old would be considered ‘a child’. Ultimately, death will be removed altogether.

Security

An important part of any government or social order is whether people feel safe. This could apply to going out at night, to the threat of crime or oppression of some other sort. Without this type of security, it would be hard to enjoy the benefits of the coming age.

Please read Isaiah 65:17–25, which includes the verse we looked at last. The existence described here is very different from today. The mood is one of rejoicing and peace. The inhabitants of the kingdom will be able to live in complete security, occupying their houses and enjoying the fruits of their labours.

They will live with a special relationship to their God, where peace reigns throughout the animal and human kingdom, a truly blessed existence, as Isaiah describes it.

A World at Peace

The descriptions we have looked at show the effects of the good government of Jesus: a world at peace, with plenty for all, and the citizens enjoying a special relationship with the God who created everything.

Most of the Bible verses we have used here come from the book of



Isaiah. This is unsurprising as he spends large parts of his prophecy describing the kingdom of God in remarkable detail. However, the same picture emerges from across the Bible, in both Old and New Testaments.

So the kingdom of God is a wonderful new world order, where men, women and children can live in peace and safety. Eventually, it will culminate in an even more awe-inspiring situation. God will ultimately live with His people, who will never suffer and will never die. The kingdom is going to be established on our world, as we read in Revelation:

The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever! (Revelation 11:15).

We have the opportunity to live in that kingdom, to enjoy its conditions and look forward to the splendour of its final state. To be a part of it, God asks that we believe Him, are baptised to show that we do, and live God-centred lives of purpose, preparing for that kingdom. Now that’s not much to ask is it?

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